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ABSTRACT

The major purpose of this guide is to show teachers of kindergarten through third grade students how to create an environment in which young learners can begin to develop the thinking and behavioral skills they will need to function effectively in their school and personal lives. It is based on an educational philosophy, the Responsive Education Program, which encourages children to develop confidence and persistence and to use creative and flexible thinking for solving problems and making decisions. Emphasis is placed on developing respect for a variety of views, needs, and strategies for solving problems, and cooperative attitudes. Part I delineates the roles of the responsive teacher and child. Brief scenarios illustrating exemplary classroom interactions are presented. Activities for gathering information about students and guiding them in developing independence are described. Part II offers suggestions on the creative use of classroom space and instructional materials. The final part discusses developing and managing responsive learning centers. Descriptions are given of the objectives and activities of 17 teacher- or child-initiated learning centers. (JD)

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THE RESPONSIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM • CURRICULUM GUIDE •

ORGANIZING AND MANAGING THE CLASSROOM

SP024 124

FAR WEST LABORATORY FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

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ORGANIZING AND MANAGING RESPONSIVE CLASSROOM

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- The many children who have shown me that independent learning, decision-making and problem-solving is indeed possible and highly probable within Responsive learning environments.

INTRODUCTION

Our Civil Rights
Room 10

I have a right to be happy and to be treated
fairly in this room:
This means that no one
Will laugh at me, ignore me or hurt my feelings.

I have a right to be who I am in this room:
This means that no one will
treat me unjustly because I am
Black or White, Fat or Thin,
Tall or Short, Boy or Girl.

I have a right to be safe in this room:
This means that no one will hit me,
kick me, push me, punch me,
hurt me or call me names.

I have a right to hear and be heard in this room:
This means that no one will
Yell, scream, shout or make loud noises
to interfere with my ideas or my work.

I have the right to work alone
And to share my work with others:
This means that we all have
to help each other.

I have a right to learn about myself in this room:
This means I will be free to express my thoughts, feelings
and opinions without being interrupted or punished or teased.

. . . .adapted by Nancy Scott and her class at Deer Park School, Fairfax, CA, from Seelab: A Process Approach for Maintaining Personal Integrity and Human Dignity for Self and Others. Published by Self Enhancing Education, Inc., Santa Clara, CA, 1975.

Purpose of the Guide

This guide is written for teachers and teaching assistants who value the ideas expressed in the "Bill of Rights" on the preceding page and who want to help children become personally involved in their own problem-solving and decision-making. Although the major purpose of the guide is to show teachers of K-3 children how to create an environment in which young learners can begin to develop the thinking and behavioral skills they will need to function effectively in their school and personal lives, it is also intended to explain an educational philosophy that has been extensively tested and refined during the last ten years in classrooms around the country. This philosophy, which is known as the Responsive Education Program, is based on the following principles:

- Valuing the learner's past experiences as assets
- Helping the learner to share control over his or her learning
- Providing integrated and relevant learning experiences in which skills are not artificially segmented
- Creating pluralistic situations in which culture, ethnicity and other human variations are respected, explored and utilized as a basis for learning

Program Objectives

When children have been involved in a Responsive Education Program for three or more years, the result is that they will acquire skills and attitudes that go beyond the ability to comprehend a reading passage or add 11 and 12. These skills and attitudes include:

1. The motivation, confidence and persistence to identify personal, school and community issues and resolve them.
2. Problem-solving/decision-making competence that enables them to identify and formulate questions, set goals, develop plans, think and work independently and in groups, and assess results.
3. Creative/flexible thinking habits that allow them to consider a variety of perspectives, recognize patterns and relationships, and develop novel ideas.
4. Respect for a variety of views, needs and strategies for solving problems and for working and playing (alone, in large and small groups and while taking on different roles).

Since program objectives are rather broad, they become more tangible when instructional objectives are identified. Four major instructional objectives are explained. below and the section that follows these objectives describes a teaching process that makes it possible for learners to attain these objectives.

Instructional Objectives

1. To Guide Children in Developing Independence

   In order to learn to work independently, children will practice:

   - identifying personal interests, questions, needs, goals
   - choosing appropriate activities
   - managing time productively
   - making judgments about the value of work

2. To Guide Children in Developing Problem-Solving Abilities

   In order to acquire problem-solving skills, children will practice:

   - identifying personal, school and community issues to be resolved
   - generating new ideas and plans
   - actively carrying out plans
   - assessing the outcomes of plans

3. To Encourage Children's Critical, Creative and Flexible Thinking

   In order to practice thinking in these ways, children will:

   - observe phenomena and make predictions on the basis of data they collect
   - look for and break mental sets
   - look for patterns and relationships
   - develop the ability to use analogies and images

4. To Guide Children in Developing Pluralistic Views

Children will develop pluralistic attitudes by:

- working with small and large groups in a cooperative way
- sharing ideas and resources
- identifying personal, classroom and community situations that need improvement
- respecting different strategies for work and play

The Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning

Central to these program and instructional objectives is always the child: What is he or she interested in? What is he or she ready for? What are his or her questions, needs, concerns? Because the teacher can be most effective if he or she works from a syllabus of children's needs, all activities should be designed to suit the pace and pattern of growth and purposes of individual children. Teaching plans are thus best developed after the teacher observes children and discovers what it is that most deeply involves them.

In order to help teachers carry out their functions of being sensitive to, observant of and responsive to children, the Responsive Education Program has identified a set of procedures designed to help teachers put the principles and philosophy of Responsive Education into practice. The essence of this procedure, which we have called the Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning (or the RPFL) is the teacher's continual gathering and sharing of information about the people in the classroom to determine which of their needs are being met, which are not met and how decision-making may best be shared. In order to facilitate this process, the teacher follows the seven steps of the RPFL:

1. The teacher gathers information about learners in order to establish relationships.
2. The teacher helps children establish a focus so that they may feel that the space, materials and learning experiences in the classroom belong to them, and may begin to make decisions about the productive use of all their resources.
3. The teacher determines children's experience bases so that he or she will know children's needs and interests as well as when and how to help them share in decision-making processes.

4. The teacher helps learners practice sharing control of learning experiences and encourages them to participate in solving real problems and making decisions about project, learning centers, use of space in the classroom, choosing and caring for materials, etc.

5. The teacher helps children integrate and assess whether the classroom space, materials and learning centers met their needs, and decide what was learned and what more needs to be accomplished.

6. The teacher helps children apply what they've learned.

7. The teacher helps children assess their individual growth and plan their own next steps.

The stages of the RPFL encourage teachers and children to interact in a context that is different from conventional classrooms. The logic of conventional teaching is shown graphically in Figure 1.

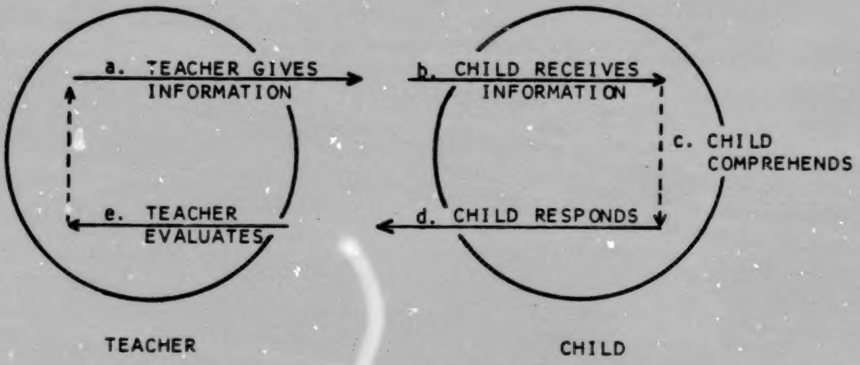


Figure 1. Conventional Model of Teacher/Child Interactions

In this conventional model, the teacher initiates and controls interactions by giving information, directions and/or assignments (as in a). After the teacher has begun the activity, the child is expected to receive or take in the lesson, demonstration, skill or concept (as in b), to understand or give meaning to the information offered by the teacher (as in c), and to respond appropriately according to the teacher's criteria (as in d). Finally, the teacher evaluates the child's ability to follow directions and meet the teacher's expectations (as in e).

The process described above places the teacher in complete control over 100% of the initiation and problem-solving in the classroom, since the child always follows the teacher's lead. This approach works well for memorizing facts and for learning precise, often isolated skills, but misses the mark when children's independence and problem-solving and decision-making abilities are considered paramount.

In the Responsive Model, illustrated in Figure 2 below, the teaching-learning interaction is based on the uniqueness of the individual child and teacher and on shared control of the learning environment.

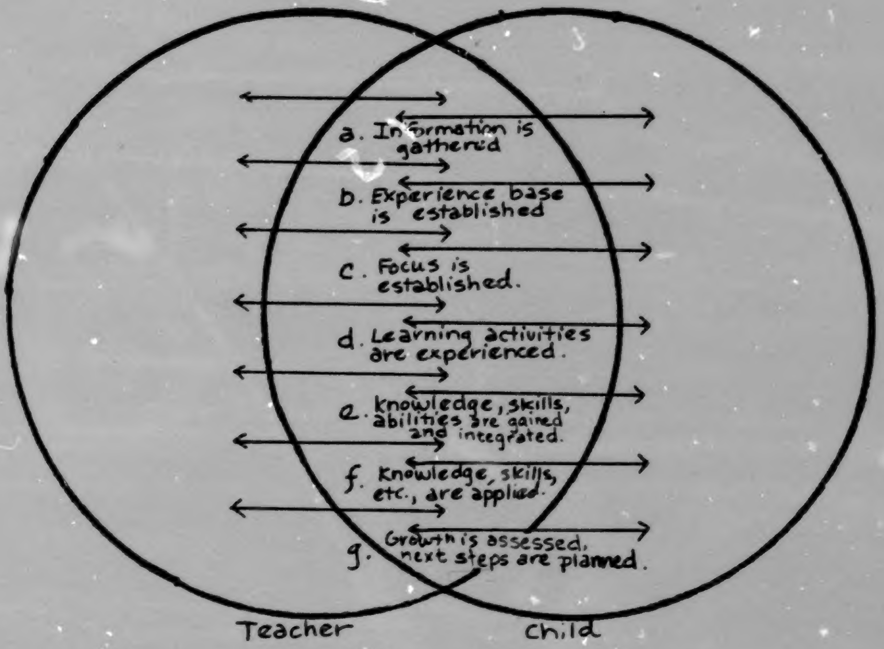

a. Information is gathered
b. Experience base is established
c. Focus is established.
d. Learning activities are experienced.
e. knowledge, skills, abilities are gained and integrated.
f. Knowledge, skills, etc., are applied.
g. Growth is assessed, next steps are planned.
Teacher
Child

Figure 2. Responsive Model of Teacher/Child Interactions

In the Responsive approach, the first thing a teacher does is gather and share information in order to establish relationships (a). Teachers do this by observing, listening and asking open-ended questions. After the teacher takes in this information about children's past experiences, knowledge, needs and interests (b), the teacher guides the child in clarifying his or her focus (his or her questions and goals) and in making his or her plans (c). The teacher then uses this information to plan the choices of activities that will build on the experiences the child brings to the learning situation and help him or her achieve his or her own goals (d). The teacher supports the child in his or her work, helps him or her integrate new knowledge, skills and abilities (e), and apply them in new situations (f). The teacher and child then assess the outcomes of the application stage and plan the next steps (g).

This teaching approach is quite different from the conventional model, where teaching begins with the teacher, and where children are expected to receive, understand and behave in ways dictated by the teacher, regardless of individual learning needs and other differences. In the Responsive approach differences between children are important factors and can only be recognized and attended to if teachers view the gathering of information about such differences and such needs as their primary concern. After teachers recognize and identify differences, they will then be in a position to respond in a variety of ways. The Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning, or RPFL, turns the logic of teaching around so that teachers respond to children rather than insisting that the children first respond to them.

The next set of considerations confronting teachers who want to use the RPFL is the organization and management of the classroom environment. Roles and relationships within the classroom, space, materials and creation of learning centers must be viewed in a way that puts top priority on the personal needs of children. In the Responsive Program, the child is at the center of his or her own education, both in his or her own view and in the view of the teacher. As a result of this assumption, the child and teacher develop a continuing personal relationship that helps the child gain more and more control over his or her own learning process.

Scope and Organization of the Guide

The major concern of this guide is to help teachers make use of the Responsive approach to teaching by clarifying the role of the teacher and the role of the child in the Responsive classroom and explaining how to manage the classroom environment. This guide is thus divided into three interdependent sections:

Part I: Creating Responsive Roles and Relationships

Part II: Using Space and Materials Responsively

Part III: Creating and Maintaining Responsive Learning Centers

Parts I and II focus primarily on the teacher but include a few activities to be done with children, and Part

III includes more specific activities for children. Interwoven in all three parts are the steps of the Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning. For example, before the teacher can decide how to arrange the room, he or she needs to gather a great deal of information about specific children through observing, talking and asking open ended questions. (See Part I) Do these children need desks for security? How much experience have they had working independently in learning centers? How much private space do they need? How much freedom of movement are they comfortable with? (See Part II) Similarly, the teacher needs to consider how he or she will help children learn to set their own goals and make their own plans (Part I) before she involves them in creating their own learning centers (Part III). Therefore, Parts I and II are necessary preparation for Part III, which deals with children's sharing control over their learning through planning and assessing their work in independent learning centers.

By helping teachers set up the most conducive conditions for children to learn skills and concepts in reading and language, math and science, this guide is meant to serve as a base for the Responsive Curriculum Guides that deal with these content areas. Specific child activities and examples are thus presented to support and clarify the specific content material in the other guides.

Although the guide is intended to be used by any individual or small group of teachers who have been introduced to the material by a Responsive Staff Developer, our wish is for the reader to assess his or her own teaching needs, questions and concerns while reading the guide. This might best be accomplished by choosing and working through it at your own pace, continually integrating and self-assessing. You will then be participating in your own individual Responsive Learning Process!

PART I: CREATING RESPONSIVE ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS

CHAPTER ONE:

THE ROLE OF THE RESPONSIVE TEACHER

THE IMPORTANCE OF ROLE CLARITY

In order to function actively and productively in any social situation, a person needs to know what others' expectations are for his or her behavior. In classrooms where roles are not clear, expectations are also not clear, and children are likely to be confused. Although this confusion may surface in many ways, chaos and non-productivity are two probabilities. In classrooms where roles are misperceived and teachers assume that they must be authoritarian and domineering, children are likely to become passive recipients of whatever orders the adults give.

This is in sharp contrast to the role of the child in the Responsive classroom, where children are encouraged to take an active part in their own learning and to share as much control as possible over their own setting of goals and planning of activities and assessments. When this special role is valued for children, it places the teacher in the unique position of needing to redefine her own role. It is especially important that she be clear about how much control she is willing and able to share with the children. It is easy to confuse a feeling of general responsibility for children's learning with the need to constantly impose adult decisions upon children.

We wish to note at the beginning of this section, however, that the Responsive Education Program does not deny adult responsibility for children's learning. Responsive classrooms are organized and managed by adults. The teacher essentially has full authority and responsibility. He is responsible for the welfare of the children, for their cognitive development, for their social interactions. When and how he begins to share some of this responsibility is the focus of the Responsive teacher's attempt to assume a more flexible and non-authoritarian role.

Some important aspects of this role are to help children to be as independent as possible and participate actively in the classroom by setting up situations in which children can contribute materials and ideas, make suggestions for better ways of doing things, lead class meetings and assist in creating learning centers and help set their own learning goals during teacher/child conferences. In other words, children are producers as well as consumers of what the school has to offer. The informal setting of Responsive classrooms is not simply a cafeteria in which the child takes what she wants or finds interesting. The reverse is true also: the child gives as much as she receives. The Responsive approach to learning thus stresses creative decision-making roles for both teachers and children.

More specifically, the role of the teacher in the Responsive classroom is:

- to model respect for children by using the Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning (the RPFL)
- to model respect for self
- to be clear and honest about rules, feelings, the amount of freedom that is allowed
- to teach skills of independence

The role of the child in the Responsive classroom is:

- to initiate more and more of his or her own questions, ideas, experiments
- to develop the ability to set his or her own goals
- to develop the ability to make more and more of his or her own plans
- to work as independently as possible
- to make judgments about his or her own work

The child will, of course, fulfill these roles somewhat differently at various ages and stages of development.

THE ROLE OF THE RESPONSIVE TEACHER

It is important to note that we are speaking here of role, not job. The teacher's job of ordering supplies, taking attendance, doing lunch counts and being on yard duty is different from his role, which is understood here as the processes he uses to help children learn.

The Teacher Models Respect for Children by Using the RPFL

> I take children as they are. I accept and respect them, their background, their experience, their interests, their nature, their abilities. I am committed to them and I will use every means I have to help them to learn, grow and find joy in coming to school.
>
> \- Bryce Moore, Fairfax, CA
> (The teachers who are quoted throughout this guide are from many parts of the country: Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Fairfax, California; Owensboro, Kentucky; Tacoma, Washington; Muncie, Indiana; Buffalo, New York.)

This basic commitment to respect children, trust them, like them, be interested in them, live with them, work with them, play with them, and be attuned to their needs and feelings is the essence of a truly Responsive teaching role. Teachers who feel comfortable in this role believe that children are to be taken seriously, not laughed at or ridiculed in the teachers' lounge; and that children are to be watched, listened to and learned from, since children are the essential ingredient in the teaching/learning process. Respect for children involves the teacher's taking steps to help them become as independent in their thinking and behavior as possible. In an effort to provide teachers with specific ways to model respect for children and their individual learning/growing processes, the Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning is elaborated below:

1. Gathering Information in Order to Establish Relationships

The first, most basic step a teacher can take is to get to know and understand the children in her classroom. This means gathering information about, understanding and placing a positive value on the child's feelings, thinking, logic and family and cultural background and previous experiences, since a Responsive teacher knows that what the child brings to any situation affects his ability to deal with it.

A Responsive teacher asks herself such questions as:

What do I know about the strengths, needs, interests of the children?

What do I see as problems or concerns in this classroom?

What ideas do children have for solving personal, classroom and community problems?

What is my relationship with the children? (Am I basically authoritarian or democratic in my attitude?)

What are the children's feelings about school; about this room?

How do my teaching goals, style and expectations relate to the children's?

A teacher learns about children by observing them, by conversing with them and by listening to them in many kinds of situations, including recess, before school and during lunch time. Observing the behaviors that characterize happiness, anger, frustration or contentment for each child, seeing how a child interacts with others and becoming aware of what the child is interested in, gives the teacher much valuable information to use in planning activities, groupings and Learning Center themes. (For an explanation of Learning Centers, see Part III of this guide.) Asking open-ended questions and listening reflectively to children's responses enables the teacher to understand as much as possible about children's thinking, feelings and past/present experience. (See the activities at the end of this section for some specific ways to gather and record information about children and thus to model respect.)

2. A Clear Focus is Established

The Responsive teacher helps children be clear about what they're doing and why they're doing it. This behavior models respect for the child as he is guided in taking on "ownership" of what he is doing. Often, a teacher will ask a child what he's doing or why he's doing it and he says, "I dunno" or "Cuz you said to." Such moments as these do not show that the teacher has respect for the child's thinking ability, nor for his ability to learn to be independent or to make his own decisions about his own learning. Learning becomes most valuable when the child puts as much of himself as possible into it.

The teacher needs to help the child determine the concept, skill or idea she is working on. The focus may be considered clear when the child can say what the topic is ("I'm working on a pattern."), what she expects to do or learn ("I'm going to make a new pattern and copy it on this paper for Johnny.") and what the results might be ("So we can make a long cube train together.").

Several elements are important in helping children establish a clear focus:

- children and teacher need to talk about their learning goals in teacher-child conferences and small groups

- children need to have some idea of how the outcome of an activity might look

- the teacher needs to help children learn to work more independently

- the teacher needs to help children find a way to assess the outcome of their activity

3. The Teacher Determines Children's Experience Base

In order to determine children's interests, needs and most effective working styles, the Responsive teacher continually needs to gather information. Many of the observing and questioning techniques referred to previously and illustrated in the Activities at the end of this section are designed to help the teacher do this. For example, if Ms. Moore wants to know her children's experience and knowledge base about electricity before she develops learning centers on that topic, she can gather children together in small groups and ask them two open-ended questions: "What do you already know about electricity?", and "What more would you like to know about it?" She might also say, "I want you to share these thoughts about electricity so that our activities won't bore you." The children's responses are then charted on a chalk board. This information-gathering technique helps Ms. Moore involve the children in deciding what experiments they want to do, how they are going to do them, what materials and how much time they will need and how they will share, integrate and assess their various activities. This process enables the teacher to help individuals and small groups plan their own learning.

4. Engaging in Learning Experiences

The teacher's role at this point is to model respect for the potential children have to become involved in their own problem-solving. This means that children have a choice about the learning experiences they will embark upon so that their learning relates to their chosen focus. When children have found a personally interesting topic (e.g. electricity), they are more likely to be:

- motivated to identify a question they want to answer

- able to think and work independently

- able to keep a focus

- able to think creatively and flexibly

- able to think critically by discovering patterns and relationships among events

- able to respect others' opinions and ways of working

Experiences may be different for different children: some may be making electric-circuited game boards, others may be learning the Morse Code, others investigating static electricity. Other children who are not particularly interested in electricity may be creating their own Class Postal Service and learning to write different kinds of letters. In all instances, the teacher provides for as many choices as the children need and are capable of handling, and as many of these experiences as possible involve the development of crucial problem-solving skills and processes. The primary purpose of any Responsive learning experience, whether independent or with a group, is to help children construct new knowledge, skills and abilities for themselves.

5. Integrating and Assessing The Knowledge and Abilities Gained

During this phase, the teacher shows respect for children by taking time to help them review, synthesize and assess what they have been doing. Responsive teachers believe that this integration is an important aspect of learning. Children and adults need times to combine new thoughts, ideas and skills with what is already familiar; time to look back and see what they know now that they didn't know before; and time to assess the value, in their own terms, of what they've accomplished. For example, children who have been working on electricity experiences could gather in small groups; share their projects and ask questions of each other; reflect on their work orally or in writing, and respond to such open-ended questions as:

- What question did you want to answer when you began your project?
- How did you answer your question?
- What did you do that worked well?
- What didn't work well? Why?
- How can you use what you've learned?

In responding to such questions, children often extend their own learning by thinking of ways to do more projects in the same area or apply their new knowledge to other areas.

6. Applying Knowledge/Abilities Gained

In this step, the teacher respects the children's new knowledge/skills by encouraging them to extend the same project or to use their knowledge in new ways. For example, during the integration stage, Michael had said, "My circuit board worked, now I want to make an electric fan." Justine had said, "I learned the Morse Code and I want to teach it to Leona." Carlos had said, "I've written letters to all my friends in here. Now I want to write a letter to the cafeteria ladies about the long lunch lines." The learning process is always enhanced to the degree to which the teacher helps children integrate and apply what they've learned. Thus, learning is not segmented into isolated skills, projects and experiences; learning is viewed by children and adults as usable to fulfill a purpose.

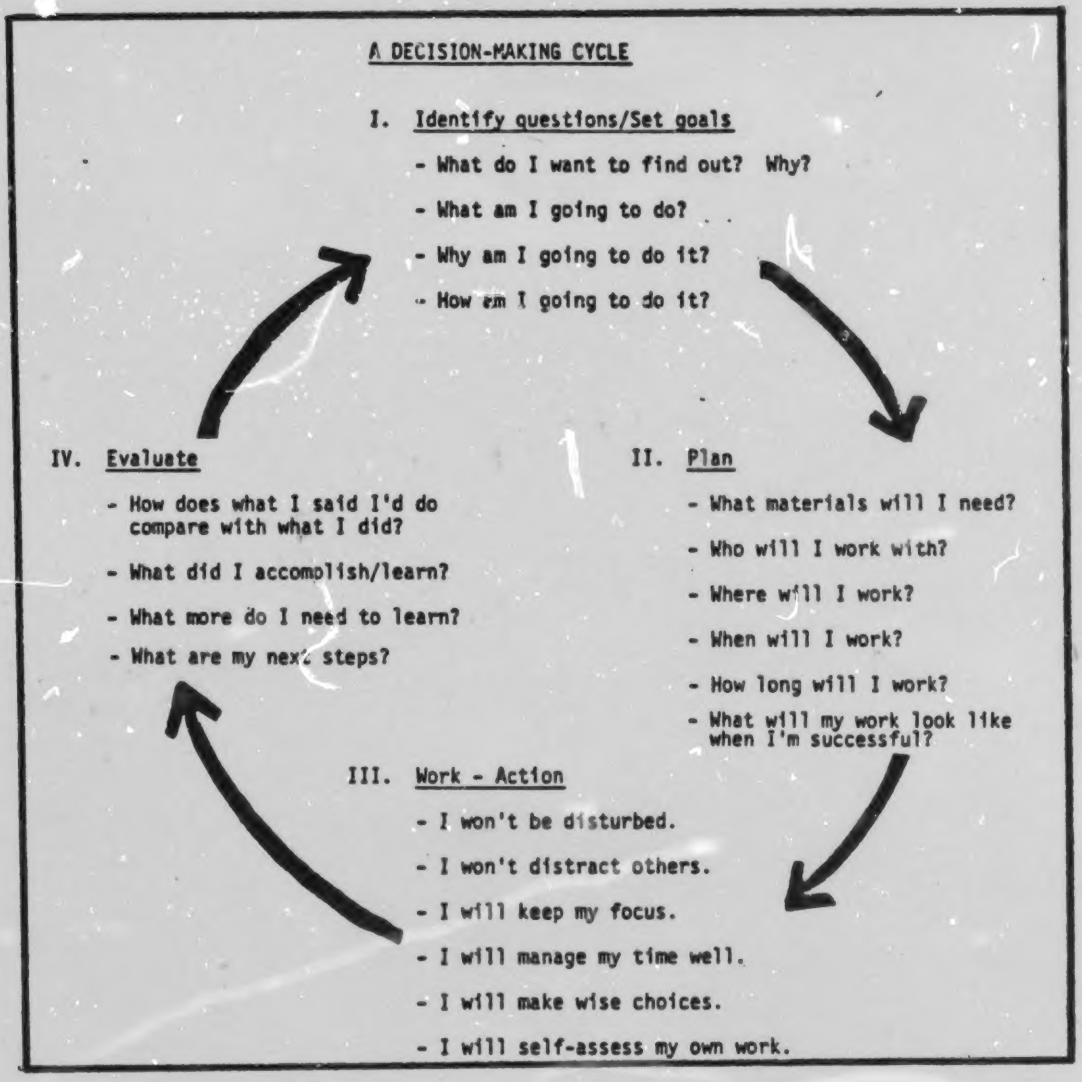
7. Assessing Growth and Planning Next Steps

The Responsive teacher shows that he or she values children's abilities by including them in the assessment of their own activities. Continually involving children in their own evaluations in this way is crucial to helping them become independent decision-makers and problem-solvers. While individual children vary in their ability to participate in this step, the attitudes and skills necessary for carrying out this stage are teachable and learnable. Children can be helped to self-assess in the same way they were helped to integrate, with the stimulation of such questions as:

- Did you reach your goal?
- If not, what could you do differently next time?
- What question(s) do you want to answer now?
- What would you like to do next?

The teacher participates in the assessment procedure by sharing her observations and records of the child's activities and revealing what he or she sees as the accomplishments and unmet needs of the child. Because this mutual, cooperative assessment is very personal, it is often handled in teacher-child conferences. It is important for the child to integrate his own feelings and knowledge with teacher input.

The teacher can support the child in planning his own next steps by helping him go through the decision-making cycle that is illustrated on the following page.



A DECISION-MAKING CYCLE

I. Identify questions/Set goals

- What do I want to find out? Why?
- What am I going to do?
- Why am I going to do it?
- How am I going to do it?

II. Plan

- What materials will I need?
- Who will I work with?
- Where will I work?
- When will I work?
- How long will I work?
- What will my work look like when I'm successful?

III. Work - Action

- I won't be disturbed.
- I won't distract others.
- I will keep my focus.
- I will manage my time well.
- I will make wise choices.
- I will self-assess my own work.

IV. Evaluate

- How does what I said I'd do compare with what I did?
- What did I accomplish/learn?
- What more do I need to learn?
- What are my next steps?

This planning of next steps will take place at different times for individual children. The planning phase thus represents another opportunity for the teacher to respect different children's pace and find out where they are in regard to their ability to set goals, ask questions, develop their own plans, keep a focus on their work and evaluate the outcomes of their work.

The Result of Using the RPFL

When the seven steps of the RPFL are followed, the result is that:

Children are becoming independent decision-makers and problem-solvers by:	Teachers provide opportunities for children to control more of their own learning by:
1. Learning to ask their own questions, identify their own needs and concerns, and work in an area of interest to them as individuals	1. Gathering as much information as possible about children's past experiences, culture, ethnicity, interests and needs
2. Learning to be clear about their focus/goals, so that they can answer the question, "What are you working on?"	2. Making provisions for all children to be clear about what is going on, when and how
3. Learning to plan and carry out their own work independently and in a variety of groups	3. Scheduling time for planning with children as individuals and small groups
4. Learning to integrate and assess their own work	4. Scheduling time for sharing integration, observing, assessing and conferencing with children
5. Learning to apply new knowledge skills and abilities in new ways	5. Encouraging children to use new knowledge, skills and abilities in new ways
6. Learning to judge the success of their own work in relation to their goals and plan their own next steps	6. Providing opportunities for children to make decisions about the value of their own work and to identify their next focus

Although, ideally, the use of the RPFL will result in the learning and teaching behavior described above, it is important to realize that we can't reduce Responsive relationships to a formula. Procedures will vary from teacher to teacher. However, the attitude in a Responsive teaching environment is unmistakable. When the teacher/child relationships are based on mutual respect and partnership in learning, we find teachers doing such things as: jumping rope with children, taking children on weekend trips, bringing in special records or books from personal libraries, talking with children about their feelings of anxiety, sharing musical interests and discovering ways to solve problems together. This type of relating does not, of course, develop quickly. It takes a great deal of time to really get to know one another, to find out each other's way of working and thinking. One Responsive teacher summed up her relationship with children in this way:

> Now I only get into rampages once in a while, and then the kids and I really clean up our act. But you know, I've always had the same attitude toward kids - respecting them, getting to their level within reason, listening, admitting when I don't know something, knowing my own limits. After all, nobody's perfect, and we know that IT'S OK TO MAKE MISTAKES!

In response to the question, "Why do you like being in Room 6?" one child said:

> It's easier to work in here than with a rule kind of teacher. 'Cuz I don't have to spend time worrying about what the teacher wants or how to get around the rules. I can really do my work in here.

How does a teacher provide an environment that is structured logically, yet stimulates children to make such statements as the above? Although it is hard to generalize, we'll list just a few indicators from classrooms where there are positive teacher/child relationships:

- Relaxed children don't threaten the teacher (e.g. kids can swing their feet in a class meeting and not be told to "sit still").

- Children like to be in the classroom. (For example, they often want to apply for the privilege of staying inside at lunch time. Then they are responsible for making that privilege "work".)

- Children initiate individual and spontaneous projects. (For example, Leo and Jus, Inc.: "The Mailbox Kids" - Order your envelopes and private mailboxes here - they're free.)

- Children and teachers express their real feelings. (For example, in one classroom children do an exercise called "Resentments and Appreciations": Bill says, "Leo and Jus, I appreciate your making our envelopes and mailboxes for free!"; Paul says, "I resent not being able to stay in the room at lunch time.")

- The teacher is direct and honest. The children can take "teacher mads" when the teacher makes "I" statements, gives reasons for the problem, and the solution he wants. (For example, Paul was wandering around the room when the teacher was giving directions, and he stopped to bother Joe and Andy who were discussing a "recess problem". The teacher said, "Paul, I resent your doing that for two reasons: (1) I'm trying to get some things together with the class on a Friday afternoon with a party for Nick, and (2) Joe and Andy have some problems and they need to deal with them. I want you to listen and not to wander...NOW." Paul then sat down and Joe and Andy went outside to settle their "recess differences".)

The Teacher Models Respect for Self

1. A Self-Respecting Teacher is Personally Clear and Realistic

A teacher who respects himself or herself is personally clear about the demands and delights of the teaching role. That teacher usually has a willingness and ability to work very hard and to risk trying out some new things. He or she is also realistic in his or her expectations, understands that good teaching is more than a 9:00-3:00 job and knows that effective teaching means continuous involvement with children and a truly professional attitude toward work. A Responsive teacher who respects himself or herself is familiar with a variety of materials and works with the children to set up a flexible, functioning, productive physical environment. He or she also maintains his or her own professional growth by reading books and periodicals, attending staff development sessions, thinking, questioning and planning.

A teacher who respects herself has a realistic attitude toward herself and her task. She knows she is not superperson. She knows she also cannot be a "superteacher" who is always perceptive, creative and sensitive to other people's feelings and attitudes and always has a sense of inner contentment and freedom from anxiety.

The teacher who looks at herself realistically will know whether or not she wants to make an initial commitment to Responsive teaching and learning. She will know her own strengths and will find the courage to explore untapped qualities that will be needed in Responsive classrooms. She will know that she cannot create a good atmosphere for children unless she is a relatively secure and joyful person. She will know that she must provide children with a good model, but one with faults as well as virtues, for children cannot be faced with the impossible task of trying to model themselves after an infallible being who has no faults and is never wrong! ("Mistakes are OK" could be a poster in every classroom!) She will let children see her as a leader and a guide, and encourage them to grow as much as they can, but she will also let children see her as a human being so that they are not surprised to find out that she has a sense of humor, combs her hair, eats, sleeps, gets married, has children, catches cold, enjoys tennis and has headaches.

We as teachers need to ask ourselves how strong we can be in handling most of our interactions with children. Are we strong enough to handle our own feelings in the classroom? Are we strong enough to not be threatened by children's misbehavior? Can kids' misbehavior "hook" us into modeling threatening or authoritarian behavior?

Teachers who model self-respect are probably doing some of the following:

- Making clear "I" statements when they "own" a problem. For example, the children are restless at a class meeting and the teacher clearly wants their attention. He shows respect for himself when he says, "This is a class meeting. We're all here, and I need for us all to attend to what's going on."

- Being honest with the children when they are angry or upset. In one person's words, "When I 'own' my own upsets, when I'm in charge of myself, then I am showing self-respect. That's when I can say to the kids, 'I goofed yesterday. I put so much energy into forcing you guys through things that I didn't realize it was going to make your behavior backfire.'"

- Sharing their personal lives with the kids. As one teacher says,

  > It took me three years to realize that my kids thought I lived at school; that the

teacher's room sink was my kitchen and that I slept on the couch in there. It was then that I came to realize that it was important to share many things with them about myself: my birthday, when I saw an exciting performance of a play or concert, when I did something fun. Now I even share my family with the children. My husband comes to school once in a while and shows the kids how to do some leather work; my son came to tell them about going to sea on a tanker; my friend came to collect butterflies with the class; and another friend came to show them about electric motors.

- Another example is a busy teacher who, when she needs a few minutes to herself, finds herself saying to the children, "I've got something I need to do. I need it quiet. Please take care of yourselves, since I'll not be available for the next ten minutes."

- Another teacher was very clear about wanting kids to look at her when she was talking. She said, "I don't like your backs to me when either you or I are talking. That's just plain disrespect in my book."

- Another teacher demonstrates respect for himself by calling a class meeting. In the brief scenario that follows, he is modeling decision-making for the children:

Situation: Class meeting - ten minutes before school is out. The entire class is sitting in a circle on the rug and on pillows.

Teacher: I've decided I need to lead this meeting since there are some things I have to tell you. I'm pleased with your behavior this morning. (They showed their class movie to 90 other kids plus a film editor in their room.) Tomorrow we're going to make sugar eggs just as we planned. (I.e. the Easter eggs you look into to see a scene revealed.) And I've made some decisions I need to share with you. Personally, I'm out of energy because of all the film work we've done this week and this morning. I don't have the energy to write letters home asking for money for the egg project. How can you help?

Heather: We can bring bowls and cake decorators.

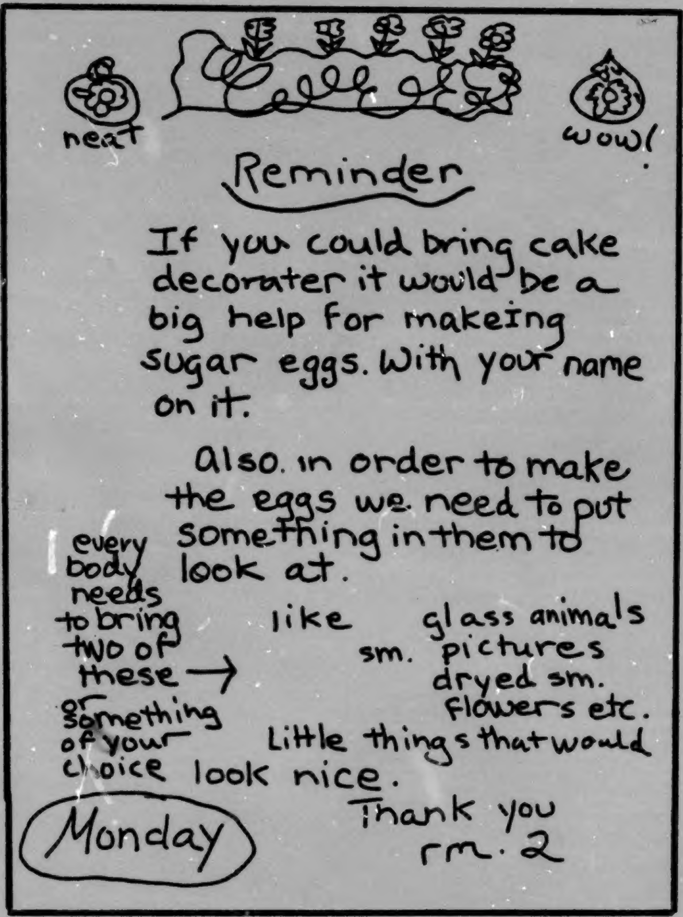
Teacher: Also bring anything else you might like to use for the inside of your egg.

Kiyomi: I've got some straw flowers. Enough for anybody who wants them.

David: I'll bring the cake decorators.

Corliss: I'll write the ditto to send home.

The following is the child-made ditto-letter which was sent home as a result of this meeting.



neat

wow!

Reminder

If you could bring cake decorater it would be a big help for makeing sugar eggs. With your name on it.

also. in order to make the eggs we need to put something in them to look at.

every body needs to bring two of these → or something of your choice

like glass animals
sm. pictures
dryed sm. flowers etc.
Little things that would look nice.

Monday

Thank you
rm. 2

2. A Self-Respecting Teacher is Flexible

A commitment to children, a devotion to hard work and a realistic, respectful attitude toward oneself and the job will not insure that one is successful using the Responsive approach unless one is also as flexible as possible. The teacher who no longer works with a pre-determined curriculum, space, materials and class structure must be flexible. The way he works one year may not be the way he works the next year. The way he interacts with Cholena may not be the way he works with Tom. His expectations for children will differ and he will match a great variety of methods and techniques to their individual needs. A Responsive teacher must enjoy the thought of the unexpected happening in his room and of the scene changing hour by hour and even within the hour.

Flexibility means that the teacher has the courage to say, "This situation is not good, we need to change it." For example:

Situation: It is Thursday, 15 minutes before lunch, in a second, third and fourth-grade classroom. The noise has noticeably risen beyond a tolerable level. The children appear to be wandering around and there have been three outbursts, with two erasers thrown and one rubber band snapped.

Teacher: (To entire group) I'm calling a quick class meeting. Something's happening in here that's keeping you from doing what you ought to be doing. The noise, all the activity...something's going on that I don't understand. What is it?

All Children: (Have moved to the carpeted class-meeting area. They're squirming, muttering to themselves, still poking at each other.)

Teacher: It seems very hard for you to talk. Maybe your tasks were too hard? I'm seeing hurt feelings and almost no work done. Is it a mood, or don't people know what to do? I'd really like to hear from you guys about what's happening. I'd like you to speak for yourself and try to start each sentence with I.

Flexibility means that the teacher is secure enough to call for help, that he is willing to listen to others, and that he is receptive to new and different ideas, even when they come from children. The class meeting just described ended with the children prescribing their own solution. They felt they hadn't been given time to do the research they needed in order to carry out their writing assignments; they asked for more time (through the weekend) to get their information, and agreed to attack the task again on Monday. This teacher was flexible and willing to explore their ideas. She had found her own style and rooted it in a basic philosophy of openness. This meant listening to and learning from others, being able to roll with the punches, facing up to problems realistically and having the humility to say, "I don't know or understand." Another example demonstrates a teacher's respect for himself.

Situation: It is story time and the teacher is reading aloud to the entire class, just before lunch. Most of the children are not really listening although they are seated at tables drawing and writing. There is a bit too much movement and whispering for a somewhat tired teacher at 12:15 p.m.

Teacher: I'm disturbed by the noise. I'm going to ask you two questions: Are you bored with the story? Do you want me to continue to read?

Children: All say no, they aren't bored, and yes, they want him to continue.

Teacher: (In a calm voice) You all just said you wanted me to go on. Now, I need for you to listen.

Children: They settle down. The teacher has not only modeled a respect for his own feelings, but has also clarified the limits of the situation.

3. A Self-Respecting Teacher is Involved in Her Own Inquiry and Problem-Solving

For her own growth and so that she can function as a more effective model for children, the inquiring teacher becomes a researcher into her own behavior and its effects on herself and the children. In order to become involved in her own questioning/problem-solving process:

- She becomes aware of her own behavior and how it affects children's learning. She may gather information through personal observation, by being videotaped or tape recorded; by being observed by others; by keeping a log; by reflecting and integrating at the end of each day, etc.
- She asks her own personal questions about the meaning of her behavior, sets her own goals for change and identifies her own measures for success.
- She plans what and how and when she will work on changing.
- She carries out her plans.
- She assesses the results alone or with another teacher, principal or staff developer.

This teacher is obviously becoming involved in her own RPFL as well as in her own decision-making cycle. She is independent in her own role and makes choices about whether she wants to work alone or with others, and who she will use as support in order to attain her own goals. She may ask such questions as:

- How much do I know about these children?
- How am I modeling respect for children?
- How am I helping children to be clear about their own focus?
- How am I helping children to work independently? (Can they work well alone and with others?)
- How am I helping children learn to integrate, assess and apply their new knowledge, skills and abilities, and evaluate their own outcomes?

In addition to self-growth, the teachers' own inquiry and problem-solving with children becomes a vivid model or source for their learning.

If teachers face classroom issues with the same constructive, confident solution-seeking attitudes they seek to promote in children, the children have frequent first-hand evidence that autonomy and wise decision-making are realistic expectations rather than theoretical ideals. There are numerous opportunities for adults to demonstrate problem-solving behavior spontaneously--e.g. a window shade or door latch sticks, a large dog invades the classroom, there is Monday morning evidence of vandalism, etc.

This modeling will take many forms, but in general, the adults will model such behavior as:

- Clarifying the goal, focus, question or issue within a particular situation ("What do I want to find out?").
- Bringing past knowledge, experience and abilities to bear ("What do I already know?") and creating ideas through experience and actions ("What are some things I might do?").
- Synthesizing the new with the old ("How is that the same as or different from what I did before?") while critically evaluating ideas and actions ("What will work?" "Which is better?").
- Using the new information in other situations ("When I have dinner this evening, I might see whether...").

As an important part of their own acquiring and making a habit of such behaviors and expectations, children need to see that the process works for the adults in their lives. In addition, they need to see two persons successfully solve one situation in two different ways. And, they need to see adults make mistakes and unsuccessful attempts and then try again. Since children of this age should not be expected to understand abstractions apart from concrete experience, they will gain understanding far better by seeing such behaviors in situations around them than by hearing about them. (See the Responsive Education Staff, Responsive Education for Children and Adult Learners, San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, pp. 44, 45.)

4. A Self-Respecting Teacher Uses Others as Resources and Support

Often, good relationships with other teachers are most important during a transition process. When a teacher is changing the way he works in the classroom to the way he now wishes to work, he has to unlearn and re-learn many things. This takes a long time.

Some teachers say that they "feel their way toward Responsiveness" through a gradual adaptation of less formal teaching methods. It is important to remember, though, that the teacher cannot do everything at once. Becoming acquainted with new materials and new ways of children working (which may result in a new noise level) can lead to tremendous fulfillment and fatigue and discouragement and doubts! While all of these are signs of growth, the Responsive teacher often needs a companion, fellow teacher(s) and the principal--in short, many other professional peers--who can share ideas, concerns and feelings.

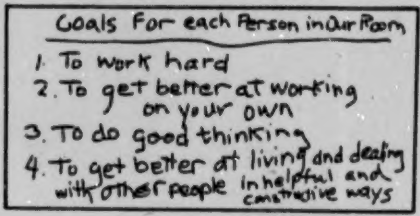
Teaming is hard work but worth it. Some teachers team with all one grade (horizontal arrangements); some with several grades (vertical arrangements); and others team on a spontaneous long or short-term friendship arrangement. Working as a team means discussing ideas, planning and working together, and assessing the day together. A teaming relationship means trading strengths and helping each other with weaknesses. It probably means working during noon hours and after school and actively engaging each other in a variety of concerns, ranging from how to write TASK CARDS in math, to how to find ways to involve children in planning a field trip. (For example, one group of teachers developed into a team as they discussed the possibility of creating electricity units and learning centers. One teacher had done this before and another teacher never had, and was a bit nervous about electricity in general. "I leaned on Kathy and she helped me get started with my kids," this teacher says. "She knew some good resources since she'd done it before. She even got it going again this year with her kids. We did it as a double-class project.")

The children's growth becomes the bond for teaming and the long hours and hard work are accepted because the teachers on the team are interested in and respectful of children's learning.

When various rationales are examined, the basic reason for the teacher to model respect for himself or herself is that it is crucial for children to experience the strength inherent in a teacher feeling competent, revealing his or her humanity, and being willing to risk making mistakes in order to become stronger and more independent. These are Responsive goals for children and they need to see and experience these qualities in their teachers if they are to learn to be open and honest about their own feelings. It is only when children learn to deal with their feelings that they can be truly involved in the process of learning how to learn.

The Teacher Models Clarity, Honesty About Rules, Freedoms and Feelings

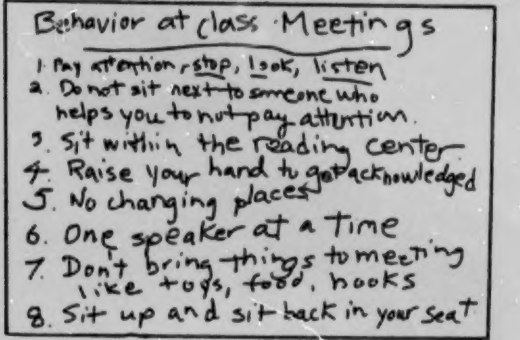
A third grade child said to a visitor, "We try to handle problems as good as we can--resentments and appreciations too." In this same room, this sign was hung in large child-written letters at child-eye level:



Goals For each Person in Our Room

1. To work hard
2. To get better at working on your own
3. To do good thinking
4. To get better at living and dealing with other people in helpful and constructive ways

This sign was posted for all to see in the class-meeting area:



Behavior at class Meetings

1. Pay attention, stop, look, listen
2. Do not sit next to someone who helps you to not pay attention.
3. Sit within the reading center
4. Raise your hand to get acknowledged
5. No changing places
6. One speaker at a time
7. Don't bring things to meeting like toys, food, books
8. Sit up and sit back in your seat

In Responsive classrooms children do as much of the rule-setting as is appropriate. In one room during several class meetings, the children had decided the following:

Why come to School?

- to learn things
- to learn how to get along with people

What's worth learning?

- things that are helpful now
- things that are helpful in the future
- things that are interesting
- things that are fun!

How to Criticize

- Be clear and own the problem
- Criticize the behavior, not the whole person
- Tell what you want done instead!

Another teacher respected children's feelings by helping them generate the following:

Things That Bug Us At School

In our class meetings	--some people never get pillows at meetings --being pushed, shoved and scrunched --being interrupted
studying	--people talking when we're working hard to concentrate --people talking to you when you're trying to concentrate --sometimes it takes too long to get help --sometimes names are skipped when you sign up for help --everyone suffers when some people are noisy
cubby holes	--people don't respect - no privacy --pencils missing --people mess with my cubby hole --people put their feet in my cubby hole and stuff falls out --people stuff things in cubbies instead of putting them away during room clean up --cubbies are too messy --cubby holes are too small
recess	--too many kids in our room from other classes --records played loud at every recess --coming in from recess - everyone suffers from some people's actions
lunch time	--patio too crowded to eat in peace --other people being on our patio during lunch --patio too messy from spills --people throw food --people beg food --balls bounce in lunches --people steal goodies out of my lunch
clean up	--people mess up other areas when they clean theirs

People ignore me.

Clean-Up Groups

#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
Becky	Heather	Kim	Stuart	Dana	Chris
Rory	Danny	Erich	Heather P.	Justine	Edine.
Kevin	Cari	Leonora	Keith	Krishna	David
Derek	Jenny D.	Garrick	Aaron	Brandt	Mike

SINK??

1. Straighten the cupboards above the sink.
2. Straighten the cupboards below the sink.
3. Wash out sink.
4. Rinse sponges.
5. Wash off counters.
6. Straighten the art paper shelves.
7. Straighten the P.E. equipment.
8. Sweep the patio.
9. Be sure there are enough paper towels.
10. Be sure there are enough sponges.
11. Be sure there is cleanser.
12. Anything else that needs doing,

DO IT

(without complaining)

Let's not play these games

"FACADES"

↓

Games and Rackets We Play

We'll try not to be "racketeers"

1. Revenge
2. "I'm tough"
3. I'm brave
4. Pretending to be a famous person
5. I'm gonna get you upset by teasing
6. I'm better than you are
   I'm no good
   I'm dumb
7. Nobody likes me
8. You like him better than you like me
9. Fake friend
   Fickle friend
10. Using people
11. I'll buy your friendship
12. If she's your friend I'm not.
13. Back-stabbing
    Telling secrets
14. Be my "one and only"!

In order to solve the problems presented in "Things That Bug Us At School", the class created their own room behavior code, which resolved three issues: What I expect from others, my responsibility to others, and my responsibility to my own learning.

Behavior Code

I would like to be treated with respect and fairness, which means people will:

1. Pay attention to me
2. Be nice to me
3. Include me in games
4. Share with me
5. Be honest with me
6. Be sensitive to my feelings
7. Be considerate of my belongings
8. Encourage and compliment me
9. Act politely
10. Be tolerant of my differences
11. Treat me the way they would like to be treated

It is my responsibility to:

1. Follow school rules
2. Take care of other people's property
3. Respect all people: adults, children and teachers
4. Use polite language and manners
5. Be patient and fair
6. Be caring of others
7. Be helpful to others
8. Encourage others
9. Include others
10. Be cooperative and honest

To help me do well in school work I need to:

1. Complete my assignments
2. Participate in activities
3. Be quiet and attentive
4. Be cooperative and punctual
5. Work out problems without fighting

It is important to realize that the "School Behavior Code" and "The Bill of Rights" that was reproduced in the Introduction section of this guide are ideals. Both the teacher and children view these as reasonable expectations that they will try to reach. When this isn't happening, it is important to bring children back inside the limits in a respectful Responsive way.

Even with class-developed rules, codes, signs and reminders, some behavior problems do develop. One teacher's log reports how she handled "Our Spring Behavior Problems":

Problem: With the advent of warm weather and wildflowers, classroom behavior definitely was taking a turn for the worse: there was noise, lack of attention, lack of respect for each other, me and school property, and general rowdiness. There seemed to be a core of kids that was causing a lot of the problems and generating bad behavior in the rest of the class.

Step 1: I let the kids know I was fed up with the current behavior and several of them expressed similar feelings.

Step 2: During a writing period I asked the children to write about what they didn't like about behavior in our classroom and any solutions they could suggest. I felt this individual thinking was important before we discussed it as a group.

Step 3: We discussed these "complaints" at a class meeting. We were able to express and pinpoint exactly what was bothering us.

We moved on to solutions (this meeting took place over a period of several days).

Children's Answers: Solutions they came up with included:

- A written record of each person's behavior during each class period should be kept.
- Those people continuing to exhibit poor behavior should be excluded from some class privileges, as well as from field trips, hikes and the year end camping trip.

The hitch came in who should determine and keep this written record of their behavior. They at first thought I should rank each of them after each period. I let them know that I was not willing to do that--it would be impossible for me to do it fairly and that it would take an enormous amount of my time. I also thought their own practice in assessment was important. After much discussion, they came up with the plan of judging their own behavior, and doing it orally as well as by writing it, in order to keep everyone honest.

The rating system they elected to use was +, ✓, -, although they redefined their terms as follows:

✓ = behavior as expected

+ = exceptionally good behavior, such as helping others, doing more than what is expected of them, etc.

- = behavior problems

They decided to postpone the second solution to a later date.

Step 4: We made the behavior cards the next day. At the end of each period, children filled in their card and said their mark orally, one at a time. (Those who disagreed with marks others gave themselves were encouraged to talk directly to that person about it.)

Behavior improved markedly! This procedure continued for the next three weeks.

Step 5: Behavior in general had improved very much. However, a few were still having problems. We discussed the idea that it was time to begin to implement solution procedure #2 (excluding these children from class privileges and activities).

The children decided to switch to a daily class behavior chart, with each person ranking himself or herself at the end of the day (using +, ✓+, ✓, ✓-, -). They decided that it would be obvious after a few days who was causing the problems.

In this example, the teacher was clearly responsible for order in the classroom. The environment was not chaotic, the teacher had clear expectations for children's behavior (and the children themselves were clear). It is true that the teacher's role had changed from that of an authoritarian to that of a participant in the living and learning of the classroom. But the teacher had not given up his responsibilities. He still had the final responsibility for making decisions and what is unacceptable in school. For example, he defined limits by saying, "It's not OK to do that now." "I want you to listen to me." "It's my turn to talk to David." Discipline was maintained not through threats, and fear or pressure from one in an "authority role", but through factors present in the environment itself:

- In Responsive classrooms, discipline problems usually fade somewhat because young children are not required to sit still and be silent all day long.

- Mutual trust and respect is built between teacher and child. This helps the child to see the teacher in a positive way as a warm, fair, helpful person.

- The openness of and relevance of Responsive learning experiences allow opportunities for teachers to step in before a child becomes too anxious, worried or angry.

- The environment permits the teacher to restructure activities, to lead a child away from a provoking situation, to help the child problem-solve and to similarly head off outbursts in a variety of ways.

It seems obvious that where there is individual work matched to a child's needs and ability, where there are "verbal freedoms", "creative work" and time for class meetings and play, there is an environment that reduces rebellious and defiant conduct to small proportions. In this type of setting children are given logical choices that help them define their own limits and freedoms. For example, one teacher queried, "Do you want to hear about homework now or during clean-up time?" Children said, "Now." Teacher, "Then I need for you to be still wherever you are and listen." At another time, this same teacher offered the choice to two children, "You may either do math or language now. If you do your math now, you probably will need to do your language task at home."

When times of ill-temper or aggression occur, honest, open, clear statement of feelings, reminders of minimal rules and suggestions for change are usually sufficient. Thus, in the most natural way possible, discipline is translated into self-discipline.

Teacher clarity about children's limits, freedoms and responsibilities is illustrated in this situation:

Teacher: We have a chance to hear and see a play. I need to know whether you have yourselves under control to listen to me explain the play AND to listen to the play when we get there. I don't want to answer any questions right now. I need for you to listen.

Children: (Nod affirmatively in silence.)

Teacher: Ms. B's group has written a play based on the book "Heidi". This is only the second time they've given it.

Children: (Begin to murmur among themselves about who knows the story and who doesn't.)

Teacher: (Waits for them to be quiet, then continues.) Ms. B's group is very nervous; they're "just beginning" actors. Tomorrow they want our critique. They're asking us for ideas to make their play better. So keep your ideas in your head. I've had personal experience of critiquing a new play in San Francisco before it opened. It was fun and a privilege. Ms. B's class needs this kind of audience. It's important to me to know about your willingness to do this.

Children: Children actively, though quietly, say OK.

Teacher: It'll be outside, so each person take a chair and we'll walk out to the big tree together.

Children: In small groups, they walk outside in lightly buzzing groups; observe the play appreciatively and return to the classroom to plan their critique.

Summary With Regard to Rules: Conventional Classrooms vs. Responsive Classrooms

What about rules? In a formal classroom there are many rules. Positively expressed, they say:

- We walk through the halls
- We work quietly
- We are courteous

Expressed negatively, they say:

- No running in the halls
- No talking when you work
- No rudeness to others

In this type of classroom, discussions are held between children and teacher about the teacher's rules; charts are made, then posted and reviewed by teachers and children are asked to write the teacher's rules ten times each in their notebooks.

This situation does not exist in Responsive classrooms because it is not needed. In many Responsive classrooms, only two rules exist:

- Take care of all equipment
- Respect the work, play and activities of other people

There are, then, three basic parts of a teacher's modeling role: the teacher's respect for the children and himself or herself, the teacher's clarity and honesty about rules, freedoms and feelings, and the teacher's willingness to share as much decision-making as possible with the children. All these aspects of the teacher's role mean that he or she needs to value children's learning to be independent thinkers as an important part of the curriculum.

The activities that follow are designed for teachers who wish to model the triple role just described. They include suggestions for:

1. Listening
2. Observing
3. Discussing Feelings and Values
4. Discussing Families
5. "People I Admire"
6. Asking Open-Ended Questions
7. Expressing Feelings About the Classroom

ACTIVITIES FOR GATHERING INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN

Activity 1: Listening

Purpose: To help the teacher really listen to what children are saying, doing, etc. in order to gather information about their interests, backgrounds, feelings, abilities, needs, etc. (A teacher needs to practice noticing what a child's eyes notice, what his or her ears hear and what his or her words say.)

Materials: None

Procedure: Listen intently and empathetically to children in their most natural environments, and perhaps ask some of the following open-ended questions in a relaxed way.

- What do children talk about at recess, in the lunch room, before and after school?
- What do children like most to do after school? On Saturdays, Sundays, vacations?
- What are their favorite TV programs?
- How do specific children feel about various family members? (Does Kimi have a favorite uncle, grandmother?)
- What is John's family structure like?
- How does Mistel interact with her peers on the playground? What's her favorite game?
- What did Joel dream about last night? Who had good dreams, scary dreams?
- What jump rope rhymes are children chanting these days?

Teacher's Integration: In order to record this data, the teacher might keep a personal log. A spiral stenographic pad is handy for this purpose because of its size. (Other ideas for teachers' record keeping are found in Part III: Record Keeping.) Whatever system is used, the purpose is the same: to record what children say or do and to find the meaning in this information for helping children learn. Logs can be extremely valuable for planning for children's interests and needs.

Activity 2: Observing

Purpose: To gather in-depth information about one child at a time (perhaps only four or five children per week)

Materials: A check list with space for comments, dates, names

Procedure: Stop, look, listen in order to find out:

- Does Jeffrey make appropriate choices?
  (Ask: Does he make choices that are too easy?
  Does he make choices that are too difficult?
  Does he choose appropriate tasks/projects?)
- Does he find the materials he needs when he needs them?
- Does he follow directions (written or oral)?
- Does he work without distracting others?
- Does he work without being distracted by others?
- Does he focus on a task for an appropriate length of time?
- Does he decide when to go on to another activity?
- Does he keep a record of what he has accomplished?
- Does he put materials away after using them?
- Does he go to the appropriate source when he needs help?
- Does he use materials appropriately, conserve materials, return materials to the appropriate place?

Teacher's Integration: The teacher asks himself or herself some of the following questions:

- Does Jeffrey usually know what he's working on?
- Does Jeffrey usually keep a focus once he's begun an activity?
- Does Jeffrey manage his time well?

- Is Jeffrey becoming more skilled at making choices?
- Is Jeffrey producing work up to his ability?
- Is Jeffrey asking and answering some of his own questions?
- Is Jeffrey learning to assess his own work?
- How can I share some of this information with Jeffrey in a planning conference?

The teacher may use an observation form such as the ones on the following pages. The category and coding system can be adjusted to fit the specific situations observed.

OBSERVING CHILDREN AS THEY WORK

Date ______________________

Activity Observed ______________________

Observer ______________________

Time ______________________

Children's Names
(add comments when appropriate)

1. Activity is initiated, planned and/or chosen by					
a. teacher					
b. child and teacher					
c. child					
2. Child is working					
a. alone					
b. in small group					
c. in large group					
3. Child keeps his/her focus					
a. at least 80% of the time					
b. at least 50% of the time					
c. less than 20% of the time					
4. Child works without distracting others					
a. at least 80% of the time					
b. at least 50% of the time					
c. less than 20% of the time					
5. Child cares for materials and space					
a. Yes					
b. No					
c. Not observed					
6. Child completes work					
a. to his/her own satisfaction					
b. to teacher's satisfaction					
c. both a and b					
7. Child assesses his/her own work					
a. Yes					
b. No					
c. Not observed					
8. Child extends activity					
a. Yes					
b. No					
c. Not observed					

Activity 3: Discussing Feelings and Values

Purpose: To gather some information about children's values and feelings in order to break down stereotypes

Rationale: Talking with children about feelings and values will help them appreciate human similarities and differences. They will learn, for example, that all people feel angry but express anger in different ways. They should begin to appreciate the importance of their differing cultural, racial and/or religious backgrounds to their own values and choices. It is impossible to overemphasize the necessity for kids to have experiences that can lead to a feeling of self-worth, as well as to an acceptance of others.

Many people have put a lot of thought and effort into ways to make such experiences accessible to children. There are a growing number of books being written for children that attempt to portray traditionally-stereotyped peoples in realistic ways. Even TV programs and commercials have begun to take into account that not all of us are from upper-middle-class, white suburban families with a standardized lifestyle.

The most important thing is to help your kids understand and break down their own stereotyped attitudes while developing a healthy, positive view of the rich variety of human experience.

Materials: Magazines, newspapers

Procedure: Try some of the following activities, all of which are related to sex-role stereotyping:

- Have children talk about their own families' expectations of them as a boy or girl. Do their parents expect different things of them as a boy/girl than they do of their sister/brother?

- Examine magazine ads: what are men and women doing? What would a Martian, for example, conclude about the abilities, interests, roles, etc. for us male and female earthlings if this were all the information available?

- Ask a girl what she wants to be when she grows up. Then ask her what she would want to be if she were a boy. Do the same with a boy. Ask why there is a difference in expectations or desires, if the difference does indeed exist.

- Give each child a news story from the newspaper. Have each child write down the descriptions used for men and those used for women. Compare the descriptions.

- Have kids make up their own non-sexist commercials for household products, toys or games.

- Read and discuss nursery rhymes and fairy tales. Have children consider alternative endings to "they lived happily ever after." Have children re-write and act out de-stereotyped versions of the stories. (For example, portray Cinderella as responding in anger to an unreasonable demand, dancing with many men at the ball, and not marrying the prince.)

- Make up (math or other) problems that provide alternative roles for both boys and girls, e.g. girls building something, boys going shopping or cooking.

- Have kids talk about their toys, starting with toys they played with at a younger age; discuss what these toys were/are teaching them to do, to be interested in, to see about themselves.

Teacher's Integration: Ask children in small groups to think about what they learned that was new and to share and listen to each other (the teacher can participate in this, too).

The teacher records his or her discoveries in a journal/log or on observation forms designed with appropriate categories for these activities. The teacher especially notes information gathered which indicates a need for more activities of this kind.

Activity 4: Discussing Families

Purpose: To gather more information about children's families and feelings

Rationale: A child's definition of herself is derived in large part from the structure and patterns of her family. In this activity, the students examine and share with others the rituals that exist in their homes. Differences in ethnic and religious backgrounds will expose students to the variety of ways their classmates and their families observe certain events, and will tell the teacher much about individual kids.

Materials: Large sheets of construction paper or newsprint, crayons and paints

Procedure: There will be a general discussion of an event all students have experienced with their families, followed by individual students recalling what connotation the situation holds for them. Students will communicate their family patterns through picture strips that may be shared with the class. You may want to:

- Ask the students to choose an event (suppertime, bedtime, first snowfall, chores, shopping, etc.) that will be familiar and interesting to the whole class.
- Have the students consider the family rituals that are part of that specific event for them.
- On a large piece of paper, perhaps 3' to 5' in length, ask each student to create a picture strip showing his or her family on that occasion.
- Have the students include the people who would be present and the actions which would probably take place. Each picture need not be precise but the natural sequence of the event is to be reflected in the placement of the pictures in the strip.
- Once the picture strips are completed, set up a gallery where the students can tour and discover how their family's rituals are like or unlike their classmates'.

Questions for Children's Integration: Children can answer such questions as:

- What is a ritual?
- How important are rituals in people's lives? What function do they serve?
- How important are rituals in your family's life?
- How different was your family's observance from most of the other students?
- What can you do to change your family's ritual to make it more fun or interesting?
- What makes your family's ritual special to you? What changes would you never want made?

Children (and the teacher) can also make a list of things they, their family or friends get angry about. Then rate each item on the list with numbers from 1 to 5 (a "1" indicating a situation in which you get extremely angry; a "5" for a situation that doesn't anger you at all). As an extension of this activity, role play the situations with a friend and discuss your different responses to "boiling point" situations.

Teacher's Integration: Record in a teacher's log information gathered about children's families. Use this information for planning additional learning experiences.

Activity 5: "People I Admire"

Purpose: To gather more information about children

Rationale: Most people admire others and emulate qualities they observe in others. Usually the people we most admire are those who are successful at something we would like to do well. In this activity, students will examine qualities they admire in others to identify personal goals for themselves. The teacher can learn much about kids as they share their thoughts.

Materials: Paper and pencils

Procedure: The students will list admirable qualities they observe in other people. They will then take steps to apply these same qualities to their own goals and behavior. The teacher can offer the following directions:

- Have the students list five people they admire. Those listed must be real people, but they can be known personally or be famous people that the student has never met.

- Next to each person's name, have the students list at least five things that make the person admirable. For example: "My Father: (1) He is considerate; (2) He is brave; (3) He buys me presents; (4) He is responsible; (5) He can be trusted."

- The students now have created a list of qualities that they admire. Have them circle each quality that they think also applies to themselves. Have them put a star by each quality they would like to incorporate in their own lives.

- Finally, have them list at least two things they can do to incorporate the starred items, and write a self-contract for each. Example: "Be brave: (1) Tell my mother right away when I break something; (2) Tell my friends I don't want to play when I really don't want to."

- Later, have the students record their progress and report on their success or failure with self-contracts.

Adaptation: This activity can be done by first listing various positive qualities and then asking students to list people who demonstrate each quality. For example: "List three people who are creative, who are brave, who are honest or who are successful."

Teacher's Integration: Record in journal/log discoveries about children that can be used for planning.

Activity 6: Asking Open-Ended Questions

Purpose: To gather more information by asking open-ended questions; to understand as much as possible about children's thinking and experiences; and to help children to think for themselves, come up with their own ideas or "build" on other children's ideas

Rationale: Open-ended questions elicit more than a yes/no or one-word answer. Such questions can give teachers information that they may not be able to get in any other way, since open-ended questions get children talking; and lead children to increasing discoveries about their own thoughts, feelings and experiences. A further important outcome of this process is that children witness the teacher's modeling. Children are more likely to begin to initiate their own questions and become involved in interactions when they are not adult-dominated. A skillful teacher is able to arrange matters so that the questions he or she asks become interesting to the child.

Procedure: When appropriate, practice asking children the following kinds of open-ended questions:

1. Cause and effect questions

   - What do you think would happen if...
     - no children came to school today?
     - no teachers came to school today?
     - we had no play yard rules?
     - the whole school went to recess at the same time?
     - we only had ten kids in our class?
     - we plugged all our extension cords into one socket?
     - none of us had families to go home to?
     - we had a hurricane (tornado, earthquake)?

   - What do you think will happen when...
     - we are on our camping trip (field trip)?
     - we get to the dairy?
     - the electrician comes to talk with us?

2. Inductive thinking questions (i.e. questions that generate a rule from examples)

   - What do you notice about...
     - how we're working today?
     - how strong our batteries are (in the electricity

experiments)?
- how a battery is different from a motor?

- What does all our discussion tell you about...
  - our behavior this week?
  - electrical power?
  - the effects of natural disasters?
  - how we feel about our families?
  - how working alone is different from working in a group?
  - how the way we worked yesterday is different from the way we worked today?

3. Deductive thinking questions (i.e. those that generate examples from a rule or involve applying a rule or past experience)

   - Suppose that the electrician came to visit us again, what would happen?

   - If some of us forgot our classroom rules again, what do you predict will happen?

4. Divergent thinking questions

   - What are some ways we could...
     - rearrange our room?
     - get out our frustrations or "mads" without hurting anybody?
     - set up a "Nutrition Center"?

   - How else could we...

5. Other kinds of questions

   - Tell me/us more about ________________
     - your weekend, the TV programs you watched, your family Christmas
     - how you celebrate ________________

   - What do you think about ________________
     - Mork from Ork?
     - Starship Galactica?
     - The BeeGees?

   - What do you like about ________________?

   - What do you dislike about ________________?

Adaptations: It would be to any teacher's advantage to use as many open-ended questions in as many situations as possible in order to gather information and to stimulate thinking. These opportunities might occur when:

- You are on yard duty, chatting with some children in a relaxed way;
- You are assessing children's comprehension of a story they just read;
- You are writing child-assessment questions for any Learning Center;
- You have called a problem-solving meeting with a small group;
- You are leading a class meeting;
- You are talking with parents;
- etc.

Teacher's Integration: Record the information gathered in a log and/or in a preferred record-keeping system. Use the information for planning.

Activity 7: Expressing Feelings About the Classroom

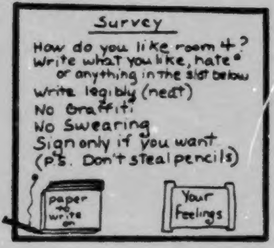
Purpose: To gather specific information about children's feelings about their classroom experiences and to encourage children to experience and express their feelings

Rationale: Teachers can model respect for children by allowing them to experience their feelings; by not trying to override them; by accepting them as legitimate. A teacher who models respect for individual children builds a base for them to respect themselves, each other, the teacher, the school and their own learning process. From that position, children are likely to learn how to identify problems, ask questions and to initiate their own creative ideas for changing situations that are uncomfortable.

Procedure: K-1: Gather the children together in a small group and talk about the fact that there are some things we like and some things we don't like. Ask children to express these kinds of feelings. Ask them to draw a picture of their favorite time in school and another picture about an "un-favorite" time. Or, ask them to "Draw a picture of what you like best about school, and another picture about what you like least in school." (If the pictures are hard to decipher, children can dictate their explanations to an adult, who will write these explanations down.) Pictures and stories could be shared with the group and a chart made about "favorite school times".

Grades 2-3: In small groups, discuss the topic, as indicated in the K-1 procedure. Ask the children to think about their feelings and write them down. They could also interview each other. Class "feeling charts/graphs" could be made by the children.

Variation: In one third grade classroom, the children initiated their own survey. This poster was taped next to the door:



Survey

How do you like room 4?
Write what you like, hate or anything in the slot below
Write legibly (neat)
No Graffiti
No Swearing
Sign only if you want
(P.S. Don't steal pencils)

Note: Hate may be a distasteful word to many adults. However, it is an honest and common word with a lot of meaning to elementary-level children.

Variation: A third grade teacher had the following sign by her desk:

> "In order to learn, we need to understand each other by:
> - sending clear messages
> - 'owning' our own feelings and ideas
> - listening for how people feel, not just their words."

Variation: Some teachers encourage expression of feelings by placing an "Appreciations and Resentments" item on the class meeting agenda several times each week. This process gives children practice in expressing both positive and negative feelings in public. (For example, Danny said to Justine: "I really appreciate you making the envelopes for us - and for free!" Stuart said to Eric, "I resent your not letting me play with you at recess.")

Teacher's Integration: Listen carefully to children's feelings and note them in your logs. Use children's "favorite time" interests as opportunities to introduce more learning activities.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD

THE ROLE OF THE CHILD IN HIS OR HER OWN LEARNING: BECOMING AS INDEPENDENT AND SELF-RELIANT AS POSSIBLE

> Independence - a child's ability to know what he wants and needs to do, doing it, without needing someone else to always help him. I think about that a lot. I don't spend enough time helping kids learn to be independent thinkers, decision-makers, problem solvers...
>
> --Nancy Scott, Teacher, Fairfax, Ca.

One's definition of the child's role in the classroom is dependent upon one's philosophy of learning. In a Responsive classroom, the most important role of the child is to learn to ask his or her own questions, initiate his or her own ideas and find his or her own answers; in short, to be as independent a decision-maker and problem-solver as possible for his or her own developmental stage.

Why do we take this focus? Because we are in an historic period of knowledge explosion: it has been predicted that within ten years, knowledge will double every single year. Every 60 seconds, 2,000 pages of brand-new information is published. Every 24 hours, enough new information becomes available to fill the equivalent of seven sets of encyclopedias. If you tried to keep informed by reading and read 24 hours a day, you would only fall behind by 1,051,200,000 pages per year. Therefore, the most important skills children can learn are to decide what they want to know and to develop strategies for finding the information they need.

Most district, state and federal program objectives for children leave an important gap in the area of child independence that includes decision-making or problem-solving. Thus, we choose to focus on the child's learning to think on his or her own, learning how to find information when he or she needs it and attempting to be as independent as possible while learning how to be a flexible member of a classroom community. In order to do this, children need to find personal meaning in their own experiences as they play the "star" role in their own learning drama.

The problem is that most materials and most teachers view children's independence as meaning that children work alone on tasks someone else has assigned. Responsive education, however, works toward a goal of maintaining a 50/50 balance between child and teacher initiation (true shared decision-making).

Independence does not mean that children always work alone; that they always teach themselves; that they only work on what they want; or that the teacher sits back, watches and grades papers.

Independence does mean that the teacher has structured a predictable environment in which the rules and amount of freedom are clear, materials are stored logically and activities make sense for children. In addition, it means that he or she has provided for a variety of interests, ability levels and paces; teaches independence as a skill; and often permits learners to make as many of their own decisions as possible.

It is definitely not enough to simply ask children to work independently! Children have to be shown that working independently entails:

1. Initiating their own questions and setting their own goals, by asking themselves:

    - What am I going to do?
    - Why am I going to do it?
    - How am I going to do it?

2. Planning by asking themselves:

    - What materials will I need?
    - Who will I work with?
    - Where will I work?
    - When will I work?
    - How long will I work?
    - What will my work look like when I am successful or what is my measure of success?

3. Working by:

    - Resisting distractions (keeping a focus)
    - Not creating distractions (not disturbing others)
    - Managing time and materials

4. Sharing/Integrating with others by explaining that:

    - This was my task or question
    - This is what I discovered
    - These are the resources I used
    - Anyone is welcome to "build" on my ideas/ discoveries

5. Evaluating their own work by asking:

    - How does what I said I'd do compare with what I did?
    - What did I accomplish/learn?
    - What more do I need to learn?
    - What are my next steps?

Gathering information about the children's independence levels is the teacher's first logical step in finding out where to begin helping them acquire even more skills that lead to independence. It must be remembered that differences occur according to children's moods, the weather, the subject matter, last night's dreams, family situations, health, etc., etc.! The Responsive teacher's purpose in observing is to gather information in order to help children become more independent more often.

Knowing approximately how independent a child is helps both the teacher and the child to set realistic goals: that is, goals that are likely to be achieved. They are then both spared the disappointment and frustration of not being able to meet unrealistic goals.

A teacher can observe for independence in many ways. The observation formats presented in Chapter One of this section could be utilized, or any or all of the following questions can be asked:

- Can the child ask her own questions and begin to use resources to find answers?
- Can the child set her own goals?
- Is the child a self-starter/initiator?
- Can the child make her own choices?
- Can the child keep a focus?
- Is the child easily distracted?
- Does the child distract others?
- Can the child manage her time appropriately?
- How productive is the child?
- Can the child self-assess?

After you as a teacher have gathered some information about the independence abilities of many of the children in your class, it might help your planning to place tallies on a continuum in order to see just how many of your children are independent most of the time and how many are seldom or never independent.

It is important for your expectations of children to match their levels of independence, and it is only when you know how independent a child is that you can provide suitable organizational structures and learning activities for him or her. For example, you cannot expect an easily distracted Johnny to be able to choose tasks relevant for him from among many activity choices. This would be an inappropriate expectation. On the other hand, it would be equally unfair to constrain a highly motivated Emily, who is able to ask her own questions and discover her own answers, after being assigned one task.

In order to assess these degrees of independence, think about your children. On the dependent-independent continuum that follows, place an X for each child in your class or write down their names. As you think about these children, which ones come to mind first? Since the names of the most dependent and the most independent ones will probably occur to you, it might be a good idea to start filling in the chart with those children. The placement of children on the middle levels of the continuum is more difficult since their behavior is undoubtedly less consistent. As you carefully evaluate and chart the children, you will become as aware of the wide range of degrees of independence as you are of the wide range of academic abilities.

Levels of Children's Independence

Consider each child's level of ability in the following areas:

- ability to ask his or her own questions and to use resources to find answers
- ability to make appropriate choices and manage time
- ability to keep a focus as he or she works alone and in a group
- ability to set his or her own goals and to self-assess

Children Who Are Independent RARELY	Children Who Are Independent SOME OF THE TIME	Children Who Are Independent MOST OF THE TIME

The distribution of degrees of independence in your classroom will influence how much you need to focus on teaching independence as a skill; whom you need to teach; what your scheduling will be (see the scheduling section in Part III of this guide); the number and kinds of choices you offer; the way you spend your in-class time; the way you use your planning time; etc. The third section of this guide will address some of these issues.

ACTIVITIES TO GUIDE CHILDREN IN DEVELOPING INDEPENDENCE AS A SKILL

Since we believe that independence is actually a set of skills that can be taught, our purpose here is to offer various ways of helping children to grow in independence. As teachers, we must first remember that a child has done a great deal of independent learning BEFORE he gets to school. He has learned much about the sights, sounds, tastes and workings of his world without constant teaching or supervision. As teachers, we need to capitalize on what he has learned in order to teach additional skills in independence. The activites presented in this section are thus designed to help teachers support children in moving toward more independence by showing them how to:

- identify personal interests, questions, needs and goals
- choose appropriate activities
- manage time appropriately
- make judgments about the value of work completed

These activities are sequenced from the simple to the more complex: from helping very young children develop a concept of independence to helping older children participate in their own decision-making cycles.

Activities included here are:

1. Look, Tear, Paste
2. I'd Rather Do It Myself!
3. Teacher's Special Tasks
4. A-Problem-A-Day
5. Cycle-Learning
6. Moving Along Together

In addition, you may want to refer to "Preparation Activities for Independent Work in Centers" in Part III of this guide.

Activity 1: Look, Tear, Paste

(This activity adapts ideas presented in Ward, Kelly, Stenning, "Organizing Independent Learning: Primary Level," Beverly Hills, Ca.: MacMillan Educational Services.)

Instructional Objective: To guide children in understanding the meaning of independence.

Focus: One way of making the abstract concept of "independence" as concrete as possible is by talking about pictures. You may want to supplement the talk by role-playing. For young children, we'll say that independence means "working without the teacher's help." Below is one example of how you could work with a small group of children to help them understand this concept. Please modify it to fit your own needs and abilities as well as the needs, abilities and interests of your children.

Materials: Colored tissue paper, paste, manila paper

Procedure:

Teacher: "We have some materials on this table. What could you do with them?"

Gillian: "Make a picture."

Teacher: "Tell us what you would do to make a picture."

Jeffrey: "I would tear the colored stuff and paste 'em on a big sheet."

Teacher: "When you were doing that would anyone be helping you?"

Markus: "No."

Teacher: "You're right. We could say that you were working without help. You were working alone with nobody helping you. You were doing your own design. I didn't help you. Is that right?"

Leila: "Uh huh."

Teacher: "When you do something alone you can use a special word to tell about how you're working. Do you know that word?"

Gillian: "Alone."

Teacher: "Yes. And there is another word: Independently. It means you're doing your own thing, all by yourself." (Teacher then allows time for individual creation.)

Assessment: When the children have finished, you might help children assess and integrate the experience by asking, "How did you feel about working independently?" Allow sharing time. The next day you may want to give these children 20 minutes of "independent work time," observe how well the children worked on their own, and record your observations in a log or observation form.

Activity 2: I'd Rather Do It Myself!

Instructional Objective: To extend children's concept of the meaning of independence by recalling examples in their past experience.

Focus: Children's past experiences contain rich examples of independence. Below is one example of how you could discuss independence with your children. Again, please modify it to suit your needs.

Materials: Books or magazines with pictures that show children, men and women working alone.

Procedure:

Teacher: "Have you ever made anything all by yourself at home?"

Eric: "Sure. Lots of things."

Teacher: "Will you tell us how you did it?"

Eric: "I made a model airplane by myself. I used toothpicks and that special glue that my brother had to buy for me. It smelled really awful."

Teacher: "And you did it all by yourself, right?"

Eric: "Yeah, after he got me the glue."

Teacher: "Does your mother do anything all by herself? What does she do without help from anyone?"

Tom: "She makes dinner, and sometimes she gets mad that no one will help her!"

Teacher: "Does she do anything all by herself that she doesn't get mad about?"

Tom: "Yeah, she makes my sister's dresses."

Teacher: "Yes, you've just given two examples of working independently."

Integration and Assessment:

Teacher: "Now let's talk about the things you can do in this room independently. Look around the room and find something you can do all by yourself -- independently."

or

Teacher: "Find some pictures of someone working independently and show them to our group; tell us how you think the person is working independently."

After the children have completed either of the above activities you might make a chart of all the independent work that was done, discuss any problems that occured and make plans for some independent work on the next day. You might also record the degree to which children have grown in independence.

Activity 3: Teacher's Special Tasks

Instructional Objective: To help children become aware of differences and learn that different people do different tasks in different ways.

Focus: In discussions about what the teacher will be doing while they are working independently, children can be guided in the appreciation of different roles, tasks and working strategies. This awareness can form part of the base for pluralistic attitudes.

Procedure: Teacher: "When you are able to do things all by yourself, I will be able to do special things. Sometimes I can work with just a few of you on a new game or project. Sometimes just one child will need something special. There are times when I'd like not to be interrupted."

Alexis: "If I work alone while you help them other kids, will you help me sometimes?"

Teacher: "Of course! I'll have time to work on something special with you too."

Alexis: "I'd like that."

Teacher: "Can each of you think of one thing you can do independently this morning while I work on special tasks?" (The teacher goes around the group and each child shares one idea for his or her possible independent tasks.)

Integration and Assessment: Follow up on this activity by helping the children self-assess at the end of the day -- or at the end of the task -- how independent they were actually able to be. Have them ask themselves:

- Did I know what my task was?
- Did I know how to get my materials?
- Did I find a good place to work?
- Did I finish my work?
- Did I clean up and put my materials away?
- Did I need the teacher's help?

- What was the teacher doing while I was working?

You may want to record the level of growth children have attained in working independently.

Activity 4: A-Problem-A-Day

Instructional Objectives: To guide children in anticipating possible problems. To guide children in generating ideas and plans for solving classroom problems.

Focus: It is important that children learn how to anticipate problems they may have. This can be accomplished by role-playing some of these potential "crises" so that children may be better able to solve problems when they work independently. Children will no doubt encounter such problems as not having enough materials, making mistakes, not understanding directions and not knowing how to do math problems. They may also have difficulty in getting along with their peers.

To role-play anticipating problems, set up activities with built-in problems for the children to identify. They will then brainstorm possible solutions, and choose the best of these.

Procedure: Ask children to identify some problems they've had when they worked independently. List these on a chart. Then set up one or more of the following problem situations:

1. Invite five children to do a cut and paste activity. Provide two pairs of right-handed scissors, one pair of left-handed scissors, one jar of paste and some torn pages. Ask, "What problems do you think you'd find here? What are some ways you could solve these problems?"

2. Invite six children to color, cut and paste. Provide only left-handed scissors, torn work sheets, not enough construction paper, and only three broken crayons. Ask the same kinds of open-ended questions as in #1 above.

3. Set up a center for seven children and provide only four task cards. Tell them that they're all required to do all four tasks. Give them only three broken or unsharpened pencils.

4. Ask the children to do a measuring task but do not provide rulers or paper.

5. Set up other types of problems and ask the children to think up ideas to solve them. Encourage the children to role-play their answers. For example:

   - "You got kicked off the bus this morning for fighting. What are all the things you could do about it? Which is the best idea?"

   - "You needed to complete your project in the Science Center and there were too many children in there all day. What would you do?"

   - "Some other child in the class stole your lunch money and you think you know who it is."

   - "You forgot your lunch money. What would you do? Why?"

Integration and Assessment: Ask children what they learned about solving problems when they role-played. Record their answers. Ask children to identify a problem they might have tomorrow; invite them to share ideas about how those individual problems could be solved. Record their ideas and observe them for problem-solving abilities.

Activity 5: Cycle-Learning

Instructional Objectives: To guide children in identifying personal needs and interests.

To guide children in choosing appropriate activities.

To guide children in managing time productively.

To guide children in making judgments about the value of their work.

Focus: Children may need support and encouragement if they are to apply their understanding of independence to their work on individual projects. (It is important for them to learn how to make decisions about their own learning and about themselves and their own creative and critical thinking. They can practice this decision-making by learning how to *set goals* (the *what* and *why* of any learning project). Next, they need to address *how* they are going to do it. This becomes the *planning* phase. (What materials do I need, who will I work with, where will I work, when and how long will I work?) Then they need *to act*, *to work*. Finally, they should evaluate their own outcomes. (How does what I said I'd do compare with what I did? What did I accomplish/learn? What more do I need to work on?)

Procedure:

1. Talk or confer with one child or a small group in order to listen to your children's ideas and discover what they are interested in and what they already know. Together, you can set goals and plan activities. Children can be shown how to complete a planning form such as:

MY INDEPENDENT STUDY

What I want to study about	How I will go about it	What I will do with what I learned

Or, children may be aided in answering the questions on a decision-making cycle:

A DECISION-MAKING CYCLE

I. Identify questions/Set goals

- What do I want to find out? Why?
- What am I going to do?
- Why am I going to do it?
- How am I going to do it?

II. Plan

- What materials will I need?
- Who will I work with?
- Where will I work?
- When will I work?
- How long will I work?
- What will my work look like when I'm successful?

III. Work - Action

- I won't be disturbed.
- I won't distract others.
- I will keep my focus.
- I will manage my time well.
- I will make wise choices.
- I will self-assess my own work.

IV. Evaluate

- How does what I said I'd do compare with what I did?
- What did I accomplish/learn?
- What more do I need to learn?
- What are my next steps?

2. Provide an exploratory learning experience so that children may learn to focus on a skill or concept that's important to them.

3. Provide integration experiences by encouraging children to talk about how they can use what they learned.

4. Encourage children to use newly learned skills or concepts in some new ways. (For example, ask how can you use what you learned in the electricity center for helping us decorate the room for Christmas?)

5. Provide assessment experiences by observing and recording children's efforts during a learning experience; by guiding children to self-assess orally or in written form; or by developing your own tests.

Integration and Assessment: Discuss the positive aspects and the concerns you have about work processes and products with individuals. The teacher and child can often both record the results of independent activities. (See Activity 6.)

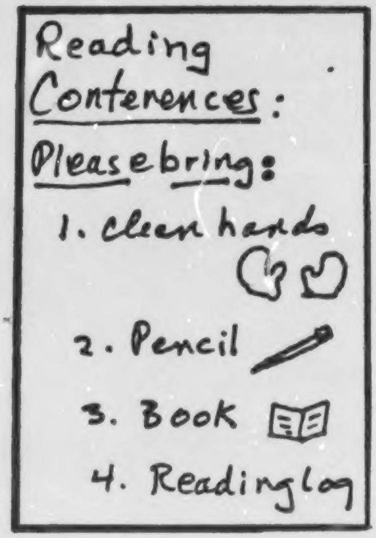
Activity 6: Moving Along Together

Instructional Objective: To guide children in making judgments about the value of their work by assessing the outcomes of their plans.

Focus: Helping children plan and assess their own learning increases the probability of children keeping their focus on self-initiated tasks.

Procedure:

1. Post a conference reminder poster, such as:

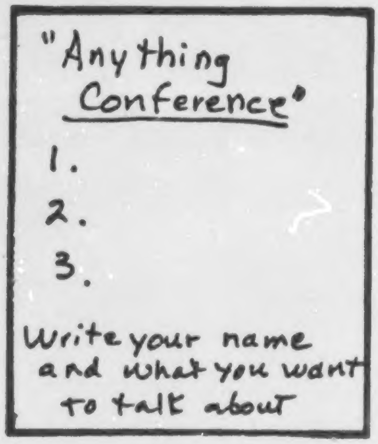


Reading Conferences:

Please bring:

1. Clean hands
2. Pencil
3. Book
4. Reading log

2. Sign-up charts such as the following could be written on the chalk board or anywhere in the room:



"Anything Conference"

1.
2.
3.

Write your name and what you want to talk about

3. Sit down with one or several children and help them answer the questions included in each part of the "Decision-Making Cycle." (See Activity 5)

Assessment: During your next conference with individuals or small groups, ask the child or children if this was a good process for them. How did it help them be more independent in their learning? How well did they think they made choices? (Was the work too hard, too easy?) How well did they focus? Did their minds wander off onto other matters? How well did they follow directions? How well did they keep records of their work?

PART II: USING SPACE AND MATERIALS RESPONSIVELY

CHAPTER ONE:

USING SPACE AS A RESOURCE FOR LEARNING

Because Responsive classrooms look and sound different from conventional classrooms, it is easy to confuse form with substance. People have sometimes stated that Responsive education means replacing the traditional rows of desks and chairs with activity areas, setting up learning centers and breaking down walls between self-contained classrooms to create large, open spaces and fluid groupings of children. But Responsive education is not accomplished solely by creating open spaces or individualized instruction. Before such techniques can be applied effectively, the teacher needs to do some serious, systematic and sustained thinking about the nature and purpose of learning. For Responsive education is not only a set of contents and processes, but an approach to teaching and learning, a set of shared attitudes and convictions about the meaning of teaching and learning, about the nature of childhood and adolescence, and ultimately, about the nature of humanity.

Unless a teacher understands why and in what way a given room arrangement, a particular time schedule, or a set of materials is preferred to some other curriculum or materials, all the physical changes in the world will have little or no impact on the nature of the learning process within that classroom. In short, the elements of the Responsive classroom--learning centers, open areas, etc.--are not ends in themselves but rather means to other ends. In general, Responsive classrooms are arranged to facilitate individualized learning more than whole-group instruction, but they are set up to accommodate the latter when it is appropriate. In addition, Responsive classrooms are organized to encourage active rather than passive learning and student initiative, responsibility and decision-making with regard to both space and materials.

The flexible use of space and materials allows children to feel that the classroom, and indeed the school as a whole, belongs to them. Such an attitude makes it far more likely that children will feel that learning also belongs to them. Opening up space, materials, time and relationships can help open children's minds to the world around them, if these first steps are reinforced by an atmosphere of trust and respect.

The criteria below are provided to aid teachers in setting up a physical arrangement of the classroom that enhances learning and makes Responsive education easier to implement.

CRITERIA FOR RESPONSIVE USE OF SPACE

1. Space arrangement is flexible, so that it can be changed to accommodate differing needs of children/activities.
2. Space arrangement provides for an appropriate variety of activities. There are individual, small group, large group, special purpose and multiple-use areas that are not crowded and will be interfered with as little as possible.
3. Decisions about space are shared by teachers and children. The arrangement of space is often used as a problem-solving activity for both teacher and children. Children's concerns and ideas are heard, respected and acted upon.
4. The classroom space is comfortable, neat, attractive and well-cared for and children understand its logic.

Since many teachers have attempted to meet these criteria, it seems appropriate to share some of their insights:

One Teacher: Often we as teachers are not aware of the degree to which the spaces we control (or are responsible for) give us away; nor are we conscious of how much we could learn about ourselves by looking at the spaces we live in. It is important for us to look at our classrooms and ask: How is my space arranged today? Why? How long since I've recently taken time to stop long enough to look at my classroom with contemplative eyes and asked myself, WHY??????--is this furniture, are these bulletin boards arranged this way? Who made it all this way? Who do I think should have input into all this arrangement and material gathering? Me only? Kids only? The principal or more experienced teachers only? All of us?

Another Teacher: Yes, space is important. And my room is too crowded. Kids like niches. I'd like tables and desks and to have it look cleaner in here. That takes energy. I'd like the room to be a lighter color. But all that has a lower priority in relation to other things now. Yes. Earlier in my teaching career I was spending more time on things like bulletin boards than with individual children. The bulletin boards seemed more important 11 years ago when I started teaching. I was more aware then of the way things looked. It seemed more important to me then than it does now.

A Third Teacher: One of the parts of my role that has really changed is the use of materials. Twenty years ago my choice usually was among two or three recommended texts for math and some reading series, and among a handful of materials in "Teachers' Supply House" catalogues. Then as I began to want to offer more and more choices to the kids, I began to wonder about space and materials. How much freedom did I have? How much freedom and control should the kids have in arranging space and gathering materials? What is space for? What are materials for? These are a lot of the questions I was asking myself. After someone very wisely told me: "Your physical classroom tells me something about who you are and a great deal about what you're doing in there with kids", I concluded that there really is a relationship between the kinds of learning I want for the kids in my class and the way space is arranged and materials are selected. It is difficult for the children to share and learn from each other when desks are bolted in rows to the floor. It's even more difficult to learn from exploration when basal texts and workbooks are the only available materials.

The teacher-identified issue that this whole section of the guide addresses is: HOW CAN I MANAGE THE CLASSROOM SPACE AND MATERIALS SO THAT THEY BEST SERVE THE CHILDREN'S AND MY NEEDS IN ADDITION TO REFLECTING WHAT I TRULY BELIEVE ABOUT CONDITIONS FOR PRODUCTIVE LEARNING?

THE TEACHER GATHERS INFORMATION ABOUT CHILDREN

As we continue to probe the Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning for clues about the use of space, we first need to reiterate the program objectives for this guide and apply them to space arrangement. Responsive teachers need to organize space so that children have appropriate opportunities to:

- work independently and in small/large groups

- solve problems

- be creative/flexible thinkers

- work cooperatively and respectfully with others

One of the most important considerations that needs to be kept in mind when arranging the room for learning is who the people are who will be living and learning in that space. The teacher needs to gather enough information about the children to provide for personalized space arrangements so that all can learn productively. Just who are the children who live in this classroom? What are their needs? What are they comfortable with? Other important questions include:

1. Do the children really need one desk per person?
2. Do they want/need "nooks and crannies"?
3. Do they want/need more open space?
4. Will they be content to store personal things in cubbies?
5. Do they need "permanence" in arrangement, or are they comfortable with more movable spaces, room dividers, etc.?
6. Do they work better alone or do they need more group interaction?

The answers to these questions will depend on the age and stage of development of the children, the time of year and the children's previous classroom and home environments.

THE TEACHER GATHERS INFORMATION ABOUT HIMSELF OR HERSELF

The teacher also needs to gather information about himself or herself: about his or her own philosophy of learning and his or her own "comfort zone" with regard to arrangement of space.

It might be useful for teachers to ask themselves some questions:

What is space for? To be pretty, to be impressive or to serve the needs of the people who occupy it? How do you usually arrange your personal space?: So that it serves your purposes for living, your lifestyle?

Recall a time when you've lived in or with a family of at least one other person. Who decided how your space was used? If another person (parent/teacher) decided, how did you feel? Whose wishes were considered? Were you consulted?

Ask yourself where you feel most comfortable and get the most done--in a room you've decorated or arranged for yourself without worrying about what other people will think, where space works for you? Or in the parlor/living room that is kept in precise order in case company comes? Are the books that you use often and feel friendly with askew on your shelf, table or desk, or are they arranged by color and size and sitting perfectly perpendicular inside ivory book ends?

Now take a look at your classroom. Who decides here what goes where? Why are chalkboards considered to be the front of the room? Who decides how desks (if there are any) are to be placed? What learning centers go where? After a few weeks, is there any checking to see if use of space is meeting the needs of the people using the space?

Space needs to reflect the personalities and likes/dislikes/habits of the persons using it--otherwise, it's a pretense. No two classrooms should look identical (yet how many "typical-looking" rooms are there in your school?).

Some personal exercises might be helpful for assessing your current use of space.

Exercise 1: Thinking About Your Own Space

1. Draw a sketch of your classroom. Outline the materials and resources that are in the room. Then ask yourself such questions as:

- Why are the spaces and materials organized in this way?
- What reasons can you think of for holding onto specific furniture and materials and arranging these the way you have?
- Who made the decisions about classroom space, furniture, materials?
- How long have they been arranged this way?
- How long has it been since you've asked yourself whose needs they're meeting?
- How long has it been since you've asked the kids how they feel about them?
- How long has it been since you've asked the kids for their comments or suggestions about the space arrangement or materials selected?

2. Write a statement answering these questions and any others that come into your thoughts. You might consider doing this several times during the year, rather than just this once.

3. Keep a steno pad log of how space is used by the children. In the same log, record how materials are used by the children. What spaces and materials are not used? What spaces and materials are mis-used? Which seem to be the most preferred spaces and materials? What is the relationship of those preferred to those not used or mis-used? Write for five minutes each day for a week. Then spend about five minutes reflecting on what you've written. What have you discovered about the space and materials in the classroom in which you live? Every day try to become a little more aware of what is happening in the classroom and more precise about your descriptions. What questions are you asking yourself? What changes do you want to try? What are you pleased with? What are you not pleased with?

Exercise 2: Thinking About Others' Use of Space

The two teachers whose comments appear below have each described how they set up their classrooms at the beginning of the year. A number of questions for you to think about are provided after each set of comments.

Teacher 1:

My room is like the ones in most schools. It's rectangular, not too large, not too small--pretty ordinary. It has chalkboards, bulletin boards, cabinets, windows, a closet and a sink--no drinking fountain in the room. We have no partitions, two tables (one rectangular, one round), 30 desks and chairs (not bolted down), and one large teacher's desk. It's large and has lots of drawers (which the kids' desks don't have). We also have one book case, one easel and one wastebasket. I work very hard at getting my classroom in order BEFORE the first day of school. I've read the class record cards so I'll know how many boys and girls there will be and which trouble-makers from last year I'll have. I then arrange the desks, tables and chairs accordingly. The wall with the chalkboard is always the front of the room. Yes, for these past 23 years of teaching, I've designated that as the front of the room, and moved all the tables and desks into a position where they faced the chalkboard, in evenly spaced rows. Sometimes I move my desk a bit to the side, a bit apart from the kids, but still in a convenient position to keep track of them. I always kept the wastebasket by my desk. I also put an extra table at the back of the room for an "interest center". Art materials and some puzzles were there for those kids who finished their seat work quickly. But I've found it's easier--at least till Christmas--to keep the children in rows. It's more orderly, quieter and they learn faster because there are never distractions. They learn the meaning of work, of basic skills.

I still prepare beautiful displays to put up on the bulletin boards around the room. There are photographs, charts, signs, maps--things that tell them what we're going to be doing this year. Naturally, a part of one bulletin board is set aside and neatly labeled "students' work".

The book case in the back of the room holds the books that I have accumulated, and oh yes, there's a table in the back of the room labeled "Library Corner". The cabinets and closets are full of well-organized books and papers. Another closet has been set aside as my closet. That's where I keep a smock, some comfortable shoes, a coffee cup and saucer, a jar of instant coffee, and some aspirin. (It also contains a metal box with the students' record cards.)

The classroom is ready to receive the children. I have made the room a familiar place for me to function in and, with my rules and routines, I'm ready to face my new class and tell them exactly what will be expected of them in the coming year.

A visitor in my classroom six months from now will find that a few changes are evident, but not too many, as children need familiar surroundings. There would be neat papers on the bulletin board under the label "students' work", as well as new and equally beautiful bulletin board displays. I believe in order and consistency.

Some Questions to Ask Yourself About This Teacher's Use of Space

1. Why does a classroom have to have a front, a back and two sides? Should the chalkboard always be at the front of the room? Why?

2. How much of yourself do you see mirrored in this teacher?

3. As far as you're concerned, what are the positive aspects of this teacher's space arrangement and attitude? Are there negative aspects?

Teacher 2:

I run a reasonably open classroom. Yet I still have organized the room from front to back. The tables and chairs are movable, but they need to face one direction. I do look at class record cards (i.e. evaluative office records that teachers have written about children) to tell me who the kids are, although I often find them misleading and inaccurate. Last year I used textbooks till Christmas and finally got up the courage to drop them for most of the kids. Then we built our own library out of our own writing plus our favorite stories from printed authors. I did find one interesting set of readers and decided to keep them because sometimes group reading is enjoyable and we can all discuss the same thing. That is a teaching pleasure for me.

I also managed to piece together a set of dictionaries, a record player and records, a slide projector and blank slides, a tape recorder, tapes, film strips and a miscellaneous junk collection that filled all the closets, so I had to hang my coat with the kids'.

Your Response to Teacher 2

1. How much of yourself do you see reflected in this teacher?

2. What do you consider positive or negative in this teacher's space arrangement and attitude?

Viewing Rooms As A Whole

Points to Remember

Before we present ideas on room dividers, private spaces and inexpensive materials, it seems necessary and appropriate to pause and view rooms holistically. What are various ways in which teachers have arranged their rooms? And, more importantly, who decided upon these arrangements and re-arrangements? On the following pages are examples of several different arrangements of the same Responsive classroom. Note the variety that is possible in arranging the same space. Much depends on the needs, learning styles and past experience of the children and the teacher. (See "An Example: Teacher and Children Plan Space Arrangements Together" later in this part of the guide.)

The different arrangements of spaces shown on the following pages imply a recognition on the part of the teacher that the primary school child needs to move, to make noise, to talk. He needs room to build things, to take things apart; to sit quietly, to think, to engage in fantasy play and drama. Providing spaces for role playing and games is just as important as setting aside areas for writing, math or quiet reading.

The intelligent use of flexible spaces in the classroom can stimulate the child's interest in different activities. In addition to using furniture that is ingeniously arranged, there is the added stimulus of seeing work displayed on the walls of the room. Some schools have done away with the usual bulletin boards and have replaced them by covering their walls with extensive amounts of corkboard or corrugated paper. The entire wall surfaces are then open to display paintings, poems, stories and art work made of three-dimensional material. These displays are changed continually.

And What About Desks?

Many teachers have been able to change their old belief that each child must have a place to sit and a desk in which to store her books, pencils and notebooks. They realize that with some children standing in a corner painting, a few down the corridor practicing the recorder, two out on the playground performing some complicated measurement and a few in the library, there is not much need to provide a seat for each child. They thus cut down on the number of chairs and push existing desks together. This opens up the room and expands the working area. When the class needs to meet together as a group, the children sit on the floor or on tables if there is no other place to sit. The removal of chairs and desks does not mean, however, that the teacher never calls the children together in the classroom. Most classes that work in a Responsive manner come together a number of times during the day in addition to congregating when the teacher calls a momentary halt to point out the work of one group, to throw in new ideas, or simply to ask a question or make an announcement.

Children keep their own things in drawers, boxes, cubbies, etc. Needless to say, the contents of this private space, wherever it is, are their property, just as if they each had a desk of their own. When children do not have desks, it's also a good idea to have a rug, cushions, couches or other comfortable furniture around, if fire regulations permit. Children and teachers spend a large part of every day in the classroom, and it should feel comfortable and inviting.

Another View of Desks

One teacher says, "Our children come from areas where they rarely have a desk at home that they can call their own. They enjoy having a desk in school where they can store their belongings and to which they can return for their written work." Another teacher reported, "Our third graders were so adamant about wanting to keep their desks that we decided to retain the desks." (Remember, these children also had been "used to" desks since grade one. Perhaps these same children might have felt differently if more open space, personal cubbies and learning areas had been present during their early classroom learning years.)

When desks are used, how many are really needed? Where should they be placed? Will they be used constantly or just when private time is needed?

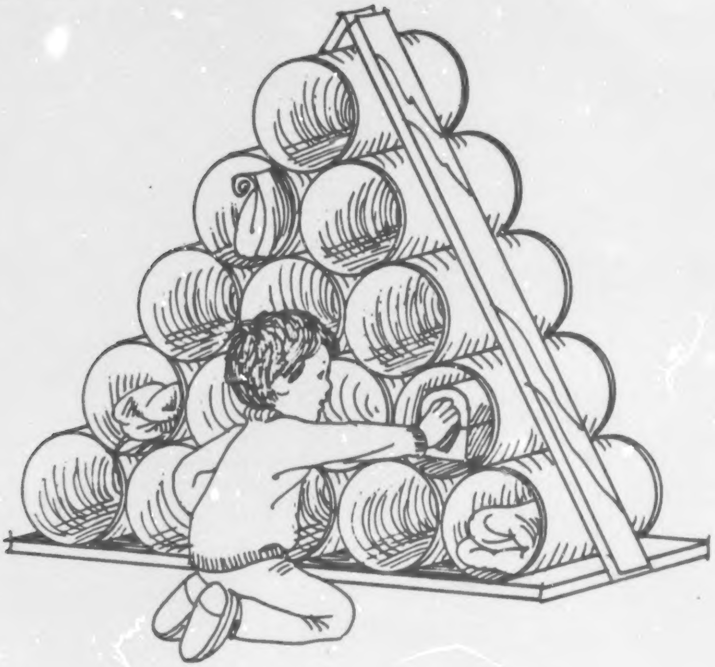
Desks can easily be moved together into units of six or eight in order to form working groups and in order to provide as much "moving around" space as possible. It is also possible to have an understanding that during the day the tops of the desks may be used by other members of the class.

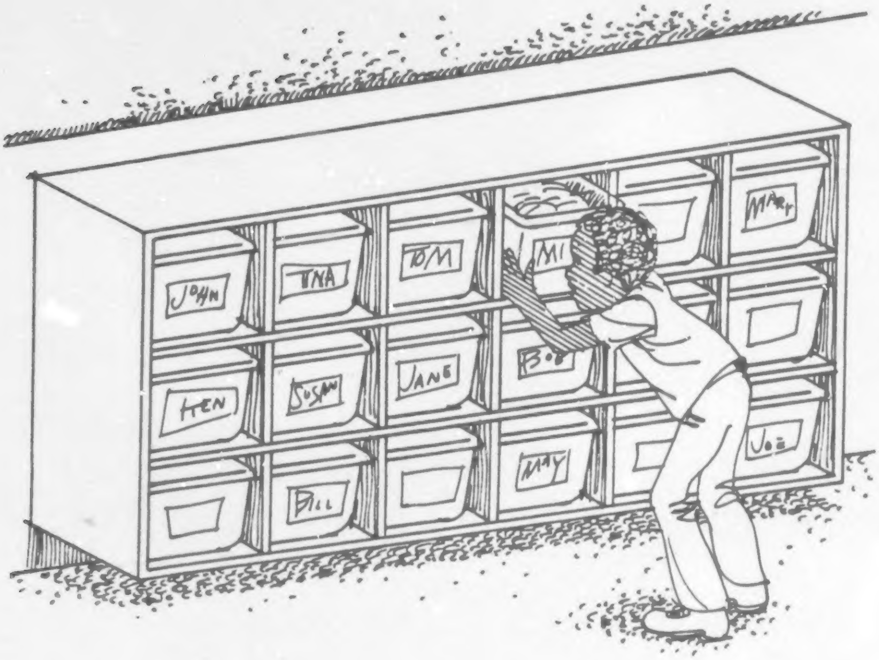
Those who urge the elimination of desks point to the additional space that they require, the difficulty that children have in moving from one activity to another if they must return to specified seats, and the more rigid seating arrangement that often results. One teacher who saw no need for desks, insisted that "if children truly feel responsibility for a room, they will think of the entire classroom as belonging to them and not need one particular spot." Even when tables are used, however, children may have "home" tables where they tend to start the day. But many teachers do not encourage the child to identify with a particular desk or table and may not even have a chair for each child. In these classrooms, children often sit on the floor during class meetings.

In rooms without desks, storage space must be made available for children's belongings, including books, workbooks, notebooks, pencils, papers and so on. There are many possible ways to achieve this goal. Bookshelves can be built and divided into cubbyholes. (In one school each child attached an individual piece of needlework over his or her cubbyhole to conceal its contents and create a decorative effect.) Plastic trays, show boxes, wire files, cardboard boxes or five-gallon ice cream containers can be stored on closet shelves or on open bookshelves. Whatever the storage method chosen, it is essential for each child to have a place to store his or her things. It is often wise to provide a few storage areas in different parts of the room so that children don't crowd into one area. Good housekeeping is another essential. In addition, each child may have his or her own file of work. Folders can be used to hold reports, paintings, graphs, writing. These folders are helpful for individual conferences between teacher and child, between teacher and parent and among all three. (See also the information on child-kept records in the Record-Keeping section of Part III.)

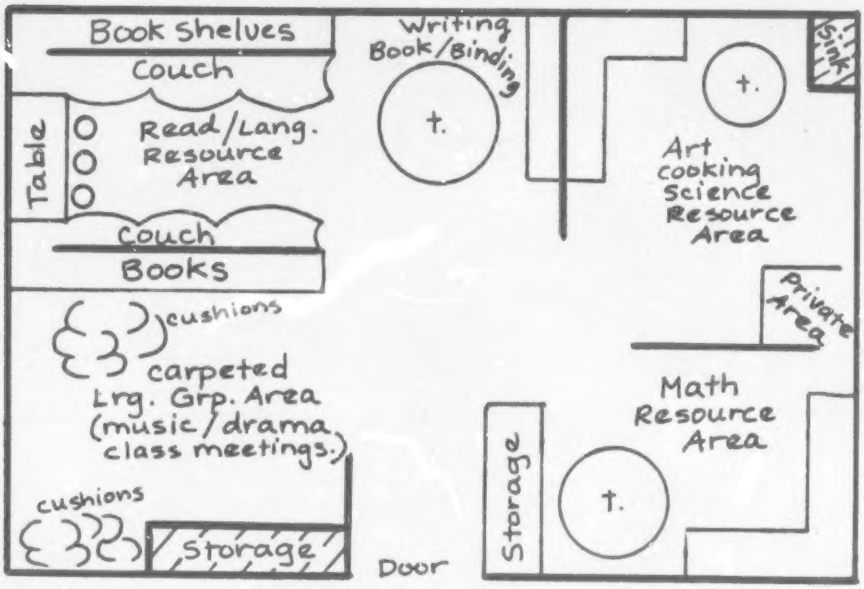
When there are fewer desks than children, personal belongings may be stored in cubbies. (Ideas and graphics are adapted from Keith Alward, Arranging The Classroom For Children, San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1973.)

Possibilities for cubbies:

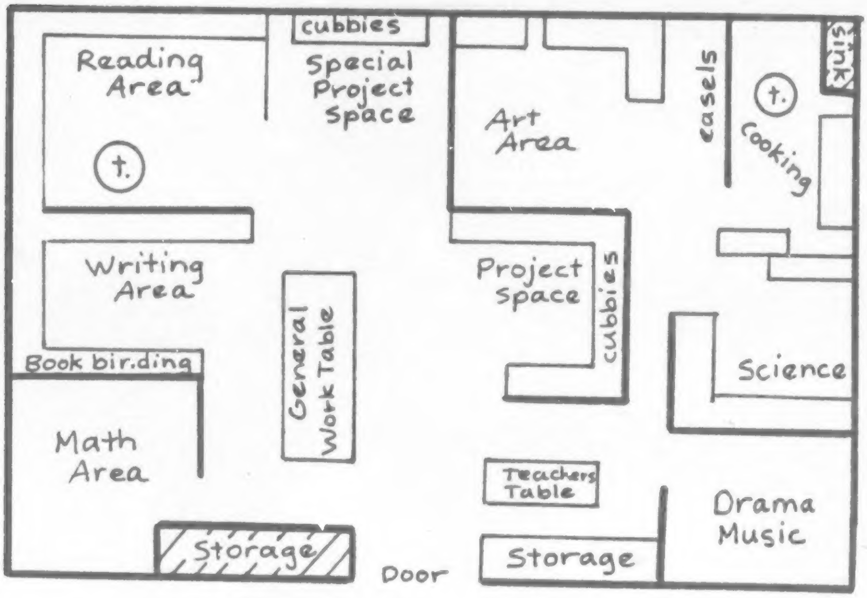




Various possibilities for arranging classrooms include:

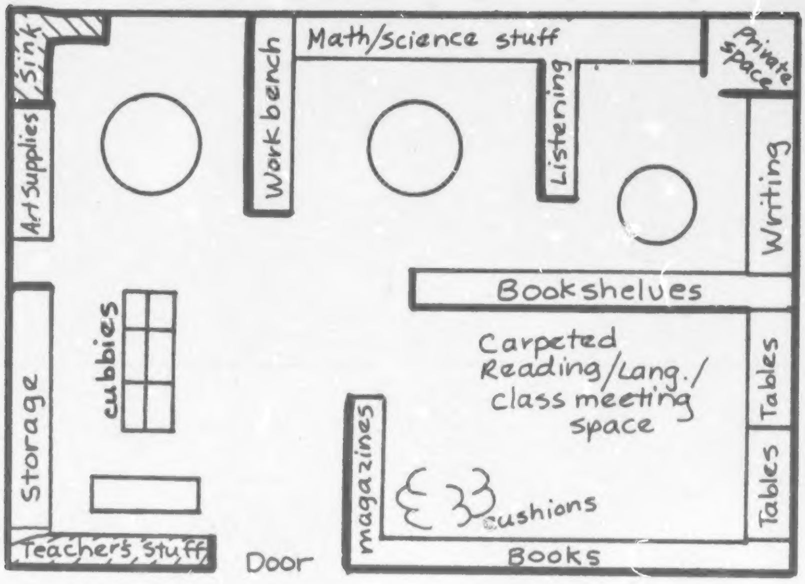


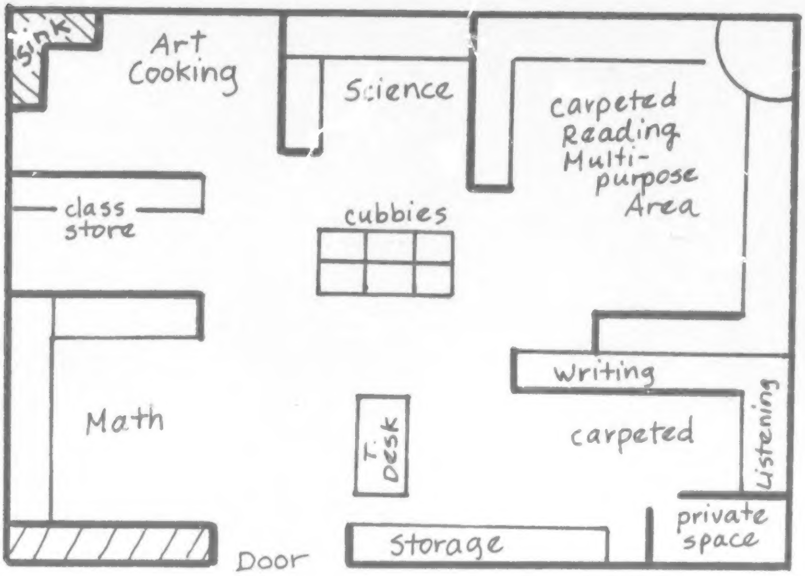
Note the different arrangements of the same space:



Shaded areas indicate permanent fixtures.

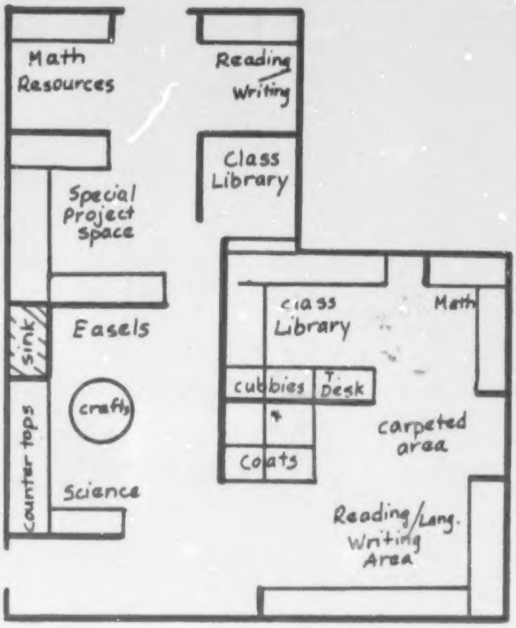
Alternative arrangements of the same space are:



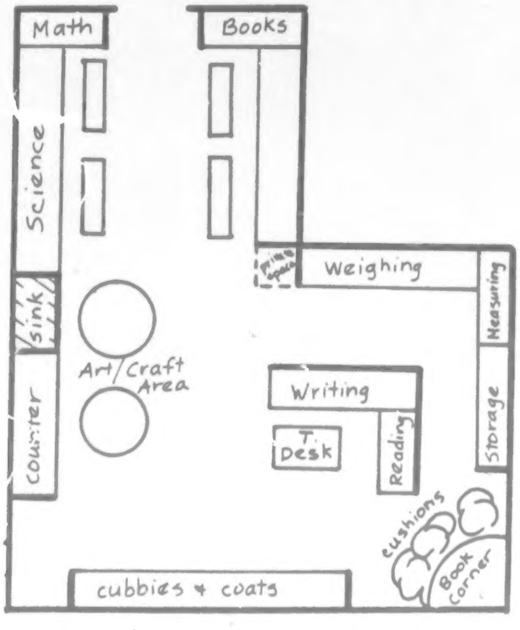


Shaded areas indicate permanent fixtures.

In another type of space arrangement, there is more than one area for reading and writing, math, science, etc.:

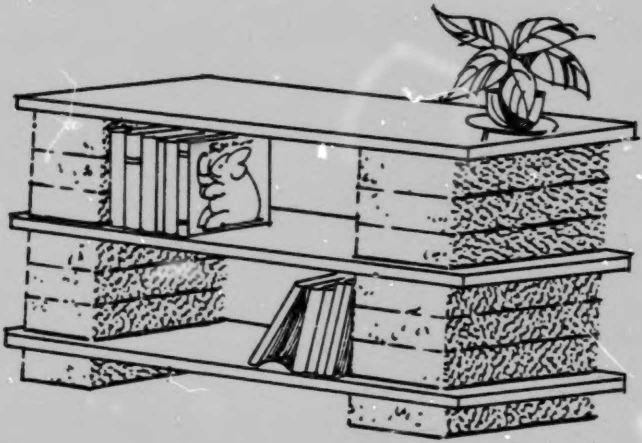


The same space may be arranged very differently. Some teachers and children prefer open spaces more than closed; some classrooms are managed more efficiently with more open space:

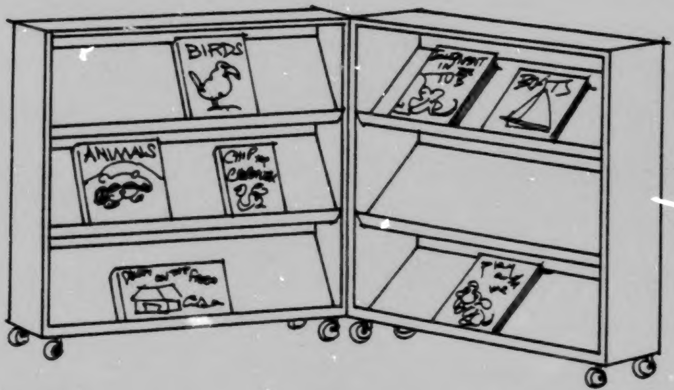


Creating Divisions of Space

Free-standing shelves offer a number of advantages. They can serve as area dividers and traffic controllers, and they can be constructed so that the shelves are open on both sides, thus allowing access to materials by children on either side. One of the simplest forms of open shelves can be made with boards and bricks or cinder blocks.



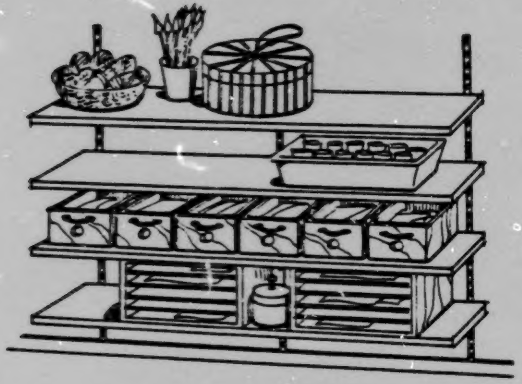
Bookcases can also be fitted with rollers, making this type of storage adaptable and flexible for a variety of uses.

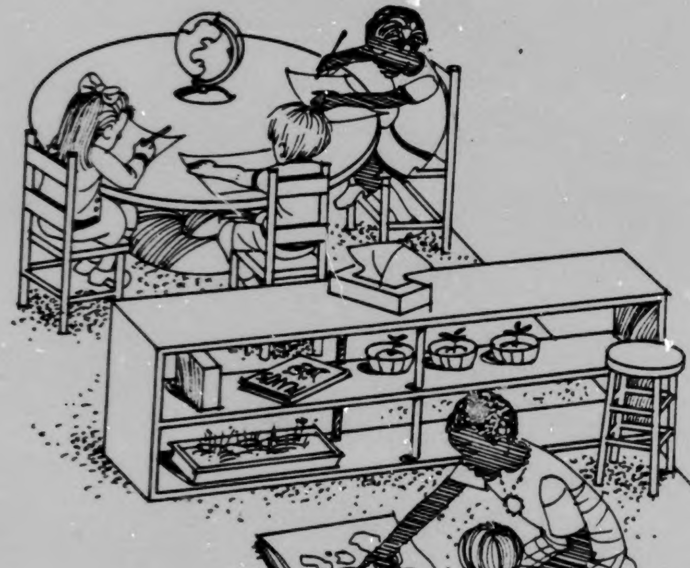


Storing Materials

All forms of open shelves can be made more useful if materials are stored logically and neatly. Many inexpensive materials will work as containers: ice cream containers, small cardboard boxes, plastic dish pans, plastic food containers, cardboard paint buckets, baskets etc.

Establish a storage place for each item, and code each box with pictures, rebus symbols or words describing the contents. It may prove useful to have the class observe while several volunteer children take a material, match it to the appropriate code on the shelf, then put the material away.

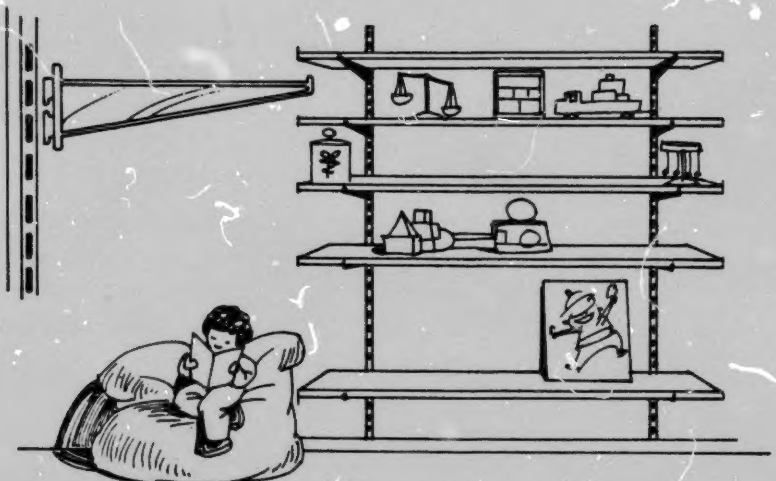




Shelving

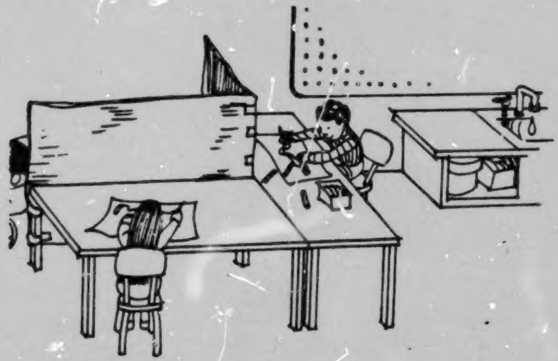
Another fairly simple means of constructing open shelves requires the use of metal "tracks" that are attached to the wall. Brackets to hold the shelves can be inserted at any point along the tracks.

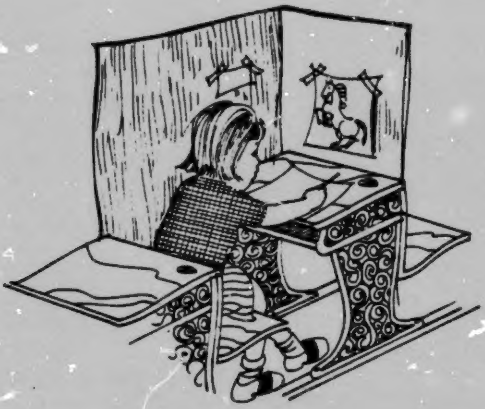
Although these shelves can only be placed against a solid surface, such as a wall, some advantages of this type of construction are low cost, the possibility of adjusting the distance between shelves to store materials of various size, and the fact that the sturdy construction allows you to include high shelves that will be out of reach of children.



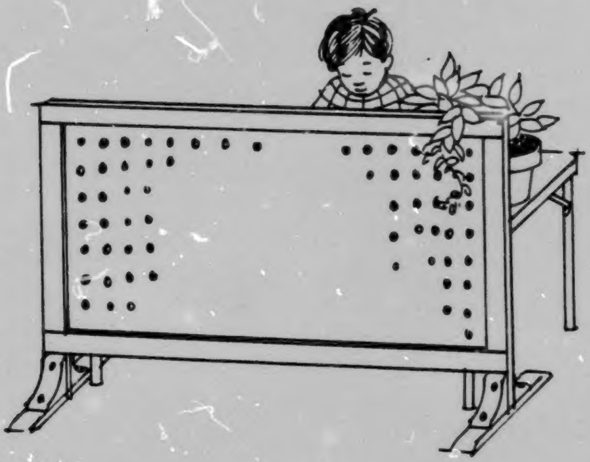
Creating Private Spaces

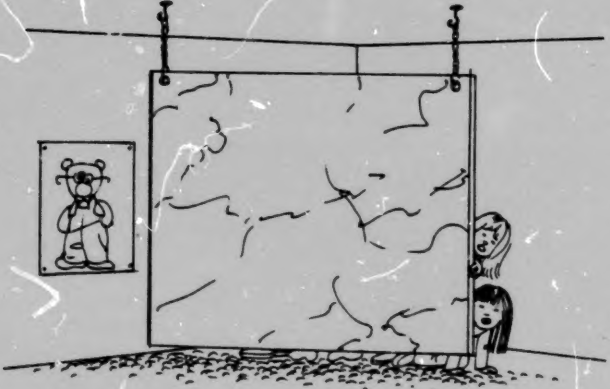
Private space is essential if children are to learn to work independently; such space can also serve as a place for them to work out personal needs or problems. Some children need to be "alone" more often than others. Some children choose "private spaces" and others need to be assigned to private spaces when they have special behavioral problems or need to avoid distractions in order to get their work done. These places can take many forms. For example, one teacher and her children created private "forts" by enclosing desks and/or tables with curtains and movable walls. Closed space is as important as open space. All children and teachers need some sense of privacy some of the time.

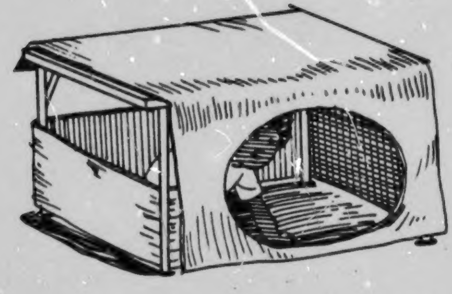


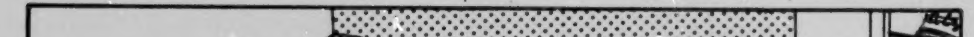


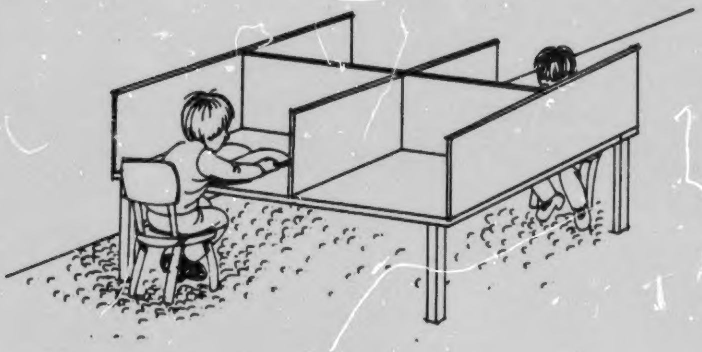
Other examples of "private" spaces:

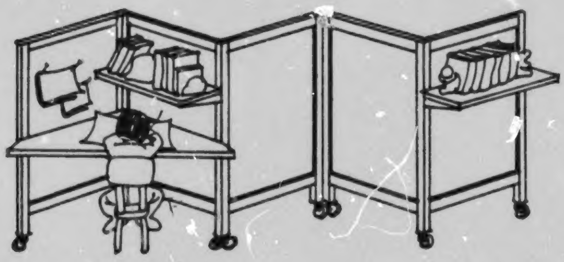


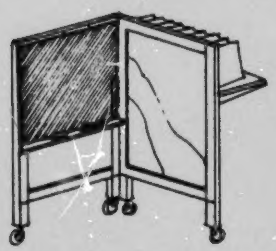





PRIVATE AREA
OUTSIDE
PIANO
BEAN BAG CHAIR
PRIVATE AREA
PILLOWS
CARPET
TABLE







Creating Other Variations With Space

Consider the Floor

"Soft" floors help reduce noise and accommodate a wide variety of activities (such as playing games, working or reading on the floor) because they provide an aesthetically pleasing and physically comfortable environment.

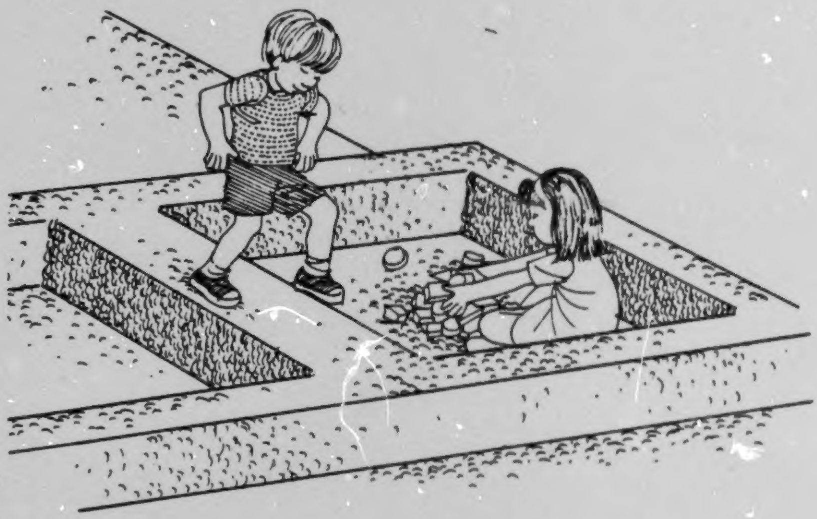
With the exception of areas of the room reserved for water or messy activities, most of the classroom could be covered with soft material.

Carpeting is the most common soft floor covering. New carpeting is usually cost-prohibitive, and thrift shops, Goodwill, or donations by individuals or industry are potential sources of inexpensive carpeting.

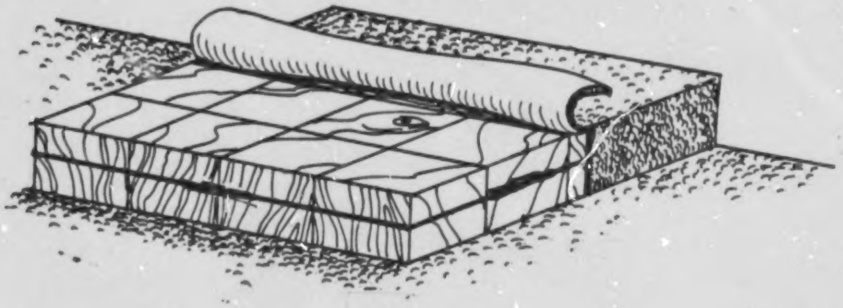
Another money-saving option is to join together small pieces of carpet. Most carpet retailers have carpet "runners" or remnants which can be easily joined by using carpeting tape. Let your imagination serve you for considering other options, such as "astroturf", etc.

Consider Raised Floor Surfaces and Activity Pits

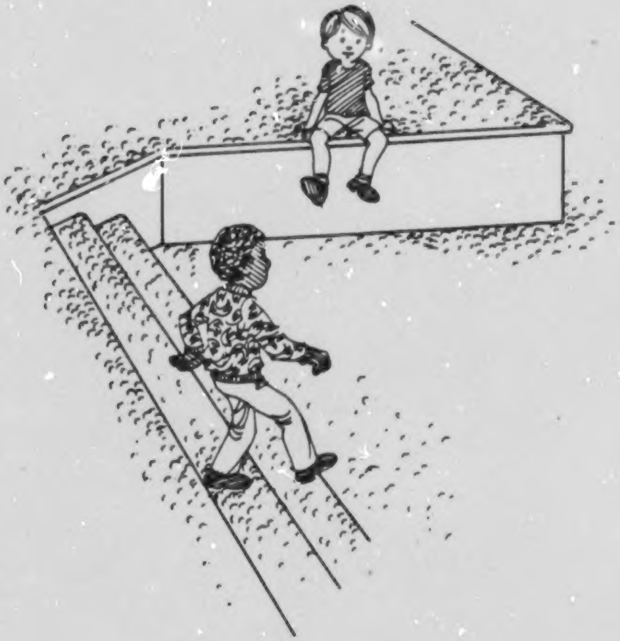
Aside from the kind of covering provided for the floor surface, the surface itself can be altered by either raising or lowering certain portions of it. A number of desirable effects can be achieved through this technique. For one, raising or lowering portions of the floor helps direct traffic, just as the use of partitions does. Raised and lowered floor surfaces can also provide a variety of work-play areas and surfaces and can contribute to classroom comfort and privacy.



You might want to try carpeting wooden boxes to use as individual modules that can be put together to form pits or other raised surfaces. These can be attached to a plywood base so that they won't separate or they can be wired together.

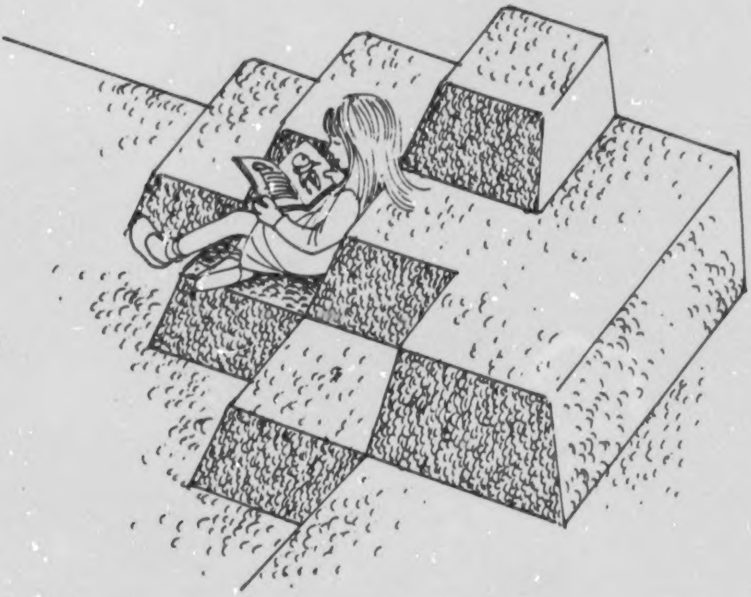


The floor surface can also be raised so that it creates a stage or theatre.



Raised floor surfaces do not need to be stationary. They can be made as a platform on rollers that can be moved to any area of the room.

Similarly, the raised portion of the floor need not form a solid surface or pit.



INVOLVING CHILDREN IN DECISIONS ABOUT SPACE

As teachers we all struggle to find a satisfactory personal answer to the issue of how much of our authority, control and power we are willing to share with the children. Since the Responsive approach is one that urges us to help children become as independent as possible; to think for themselves on a variety of issues and to continually engage in individual and group problem-solving, Responsive teachers tend to resolve the control issue by trying to use as many situations as possible to involve children in making decisions about things that affect their lives. The following vignette describes how one teacher invited a small group of children to share control over decisions about their classroom space arrangement.

An Example: Teacher and Children Plan Space Arrangements Together

Situation: The teacher has become uncomfortable with the physical arrangement of the classroom. She feels it's getting messy and crowded and decides to ask the children to help her make some decisions about changing it. She has asked six children to meet with her. They're sitting on cushions in the carpeted area--as far away from the other part of the class as possible.

Process: (condensed from audio tape)

Teacher: I'm not pleased with the way our room looks or feels lately. I've noticed things aren't getting put away the way they used to, and there's trash under some tables. In fact, I'm bored with the way it looks. I'm wondering if any of you feel like I do.

Janelle: Yeah, can we change it around?

Teacher: Thanks, Janelle, that's really why I called this meeting. Let's first think of all the things we don't like about our space right now.

Amy: It's kinda crowded. I keep bumping into desks.

Aaron: There's no place to be alone.

Tia-lin: Yeah, and there's no place to do science.

Kenji: I'd like to have a couch like Room 5.

Teacher: So, there are a lot of things we need to do. Now, for just a few minutes let's think about how we'd like this room to really be. Let's close our eyes and fantasize, really think, draw a picture of it in our minds. Let's just be quiet for a few minutes and get an image of a really cool classroom. (She gives the children several moments to sit quietly. Then they seem ready to share.) What did you "see"?

Marco: It's neat, clean, everybody helping. Everybody's getting along.

Amy: Each kid has his own special place--more than a desk--I'm not sure what, but a special place--places like we don't have now. Let's move some of the furniture!

Teacher: I'm thinking we may need to think about it first; make some plans. We may even need some resources. I've got some teacher's books with pictures and "maps" of different ways to arrange a room. How about making some of our own drawings?

Janelle: Why don't we make up some different ways of fixing up this place and then tell the rest of the class?

Tia-lin: And they could vote.

Teacher: How about making some "scale" drawings of how the room could be?

Kenji: What's that?

Amy: Drawn to scale. You know, 1" = 6' stuff.

Aaron: I've got an idea. I think first we should draw our room with the "fixed" stuff in it. You know, the things we can't do anything about. The walls, sink, chalkboards, doors, cabinets, etc.

Teacher: I think we should also draw the classroom as it is now, with all our desks and chairs in it, so we can compare it with our imaginations, and also compare it with what we come up with.

Tia-lin: Maybe we could have a contest - DESIGN THE CLASSROOM YOU'D LIKE BEST! Then we could all vote and choose the one most kids liked best.

Amy: Let's call it "SPRING RE-MODELING."

Tia-lin: Let's call it "ROOM 5's FACE-LIFT!!"

Amy: Maybe we could have a "garage sale" of all the stuff we wanted to get rid of!

Teacher: OK, you all are really terrific. AND we need to decide who's going to do WHAT. Let's make a list of the things that need to be done. (Kids dictate as the teacher records on the board.)

Janelle: Somebody needs to draw the classroom as it is now.

Marco: Somebody else needs to draw just the stuff we can't do anything about.

Kenji: Then we need to get the contest going--all kinds of different ways we could fix up this place. How about telling everybody else what we're thinking and ask for their ideas (it might help their minds).

Teacher: So you're saying that if the six of us get excited enough about the idea, that excitement might be catching and affect some of the other kids?

Aaron: Yeah, for sure.

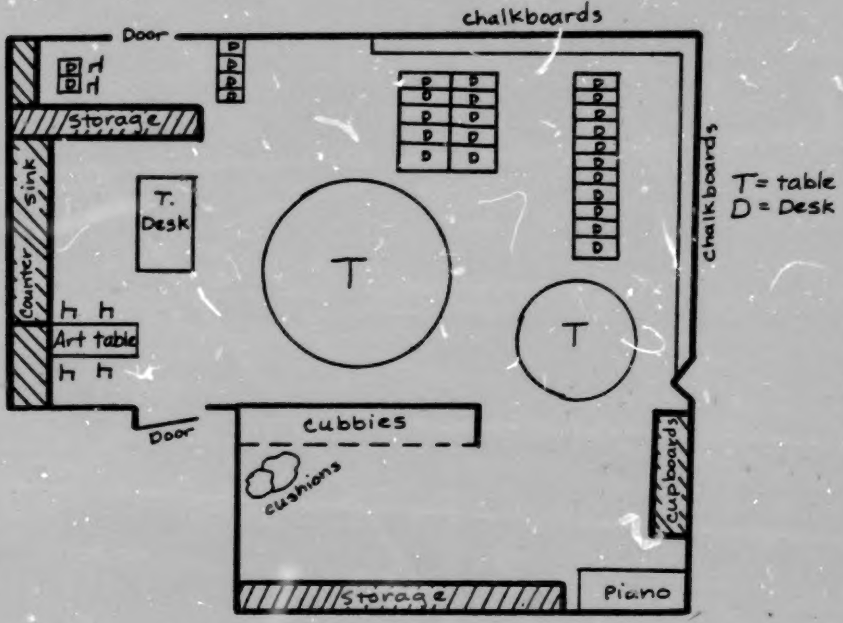
Teacher: Great. Now let's decide who's going to do what on the list of things to do.

Aaron: I'll...

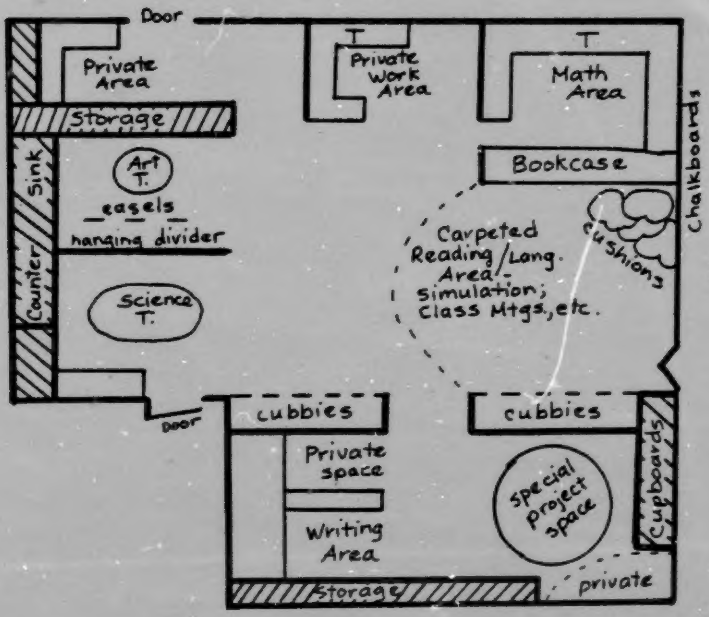
Tia-lin: I'll...

Marco: I'll...

#1: Room 5 Before "Operation Facelift" (shaded areas are permanent fixtures)

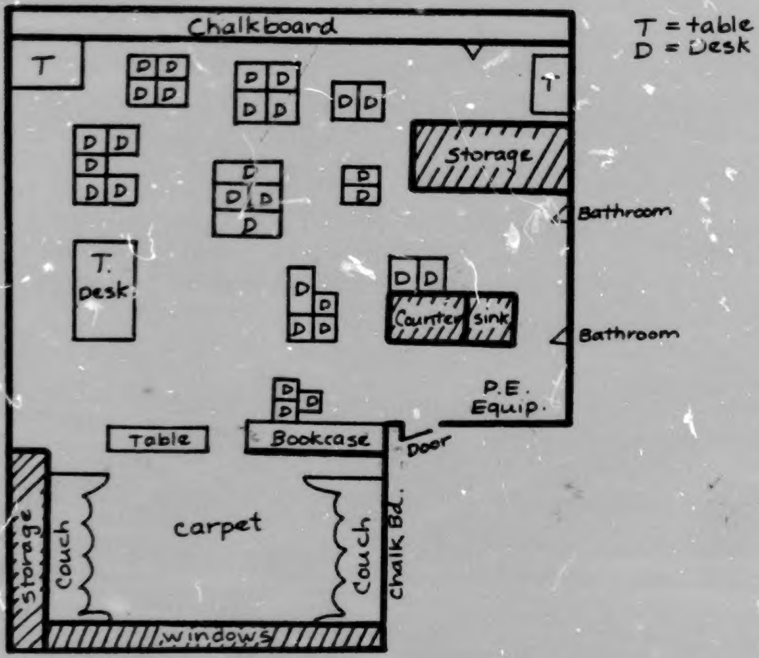


#2: The same classroom After "Operation Facelift"

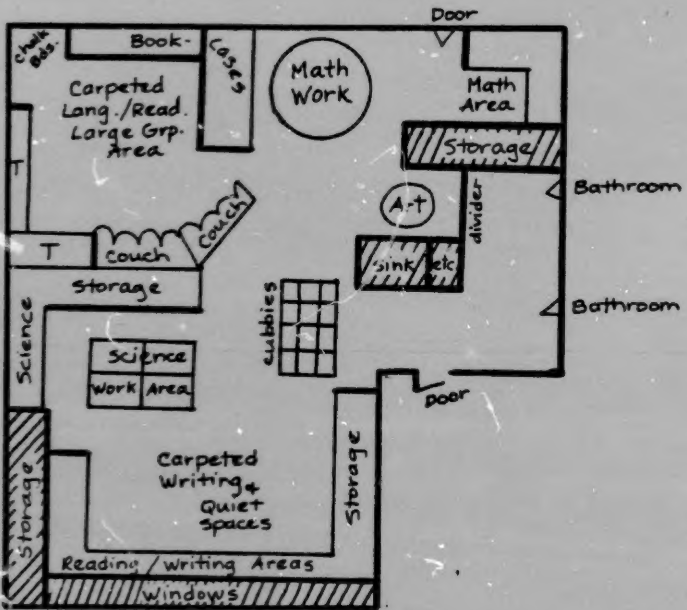


Another teacher re-arranged the classroom space after children had offered their input:

BEFORE:



AFTER:



An Activity for Involving Children in Making Decisions About Space

Purpose: To share ideas and decisions about the arrangement and use of classroom space.

Procedure:

1. Gather together a group of children who want to talk about the physical arrangement of the room. Sit quietly together in comfortable positions--preferably on a carpet or cushions.

2. Tell the children you'd like them to help make some decisions about how the classroom is arranged.

3. Ask each person to remember a place that has been very special to him or her, a place where he or she felt at home. "It may be a place where you went to hide, to dream, to have a club meeting, or to read alone or with someone else."

4. Remember that special place and tell us about it. Share with us:

    - where that place was/is;
    - how you felt when you were there;
    - what you did there.

5. After each child who wishes to share has told the group about his or her special place, ask, "Can we make any places like that in our classroom?"

6. First list the children's ideas on a large sheet of paper or chalkboard, then ask the children to evaluate the ideas by choosing the one they could help incorporate first, second, third, etc. (This ranking might be based on which idea most people thought would be easiest to accomplish.)

7. Ask the children to help you decide what should be done first, second, third, etc.

Adaptation: Older children could form committees to work on individual ideas and present them at a class meeting.

Assessment: Children can draw pictures of their "special place" or pictures of how the classroom would look if it was changed. They might also write a list of the ideas generated by the group or write or talk about how it feels to help make classroom decisions.

CHAPTER TWO:

USING MATERIALS AS A RESOURCE FOR LEARNING

> This is an important concept for learning in general. Children rarely have the opportunity to be a part of building things from the ground floor. They are too often prevented from seeing things grow from nothing. Birthday parties, their house, their classroom, the stores, their church appear to them already completed. It is no wonder they have no sense of the work involved in creating and maintaining their surroundings. We ask them to abstract this idea, when they have not had an opportunity to experience it. Children should come to school the first day and experience blank bulletin boards and participate in making the classroom their classroom. If they bring things from home, they have a part in creating the learning materials. When children share the experience of helping one another build something, they show a pride in their classroom and in its materials that at one time you might have thought impossible.
>
> --Mary Baratta-Lorton (Mathematics Their Way, Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1976.)

Materials don't teach; they have no inherent power. Materials themselves are lifeless. Learning occurs when children use materials as aids to personal intellectual activity and as stimulants to feeling and imagination.

The Responsive teacher's role is to offer the child situations that encourage him or her to experiment and to manipulate things and symbols to see what results can be produced. Since the child must "do" at his or her own rate, the teacher must arrange the classroom environment to permit children to learn in their own way as well as at their own pace. This means providing young children with an abundance of concrete materials they can explore and placing the materials so that children can get at them easily. If children have a rich array of material to work with and if the materials are easily available and can be used safely, the teacher will be far better able to allow children to work on their own without constant supervision.

As you as a teacher probably realize, children invest materials with meaning. A "well-stocked" classroom can be sterile. Responsive programs can be successfully operated without any commercial materials (except books). Natural, homemade materials, discarded business products and junk have wide usage for learning.

Materials are useful only to the degree to which they are used. And to be used they must "fit" the children. This means that the teacher can't simple select materials on the basis of someone else's list (although lists can be valuable for stimulating possible ideas). Rather, the teacher must decide what specific books and materials she wants in each part of the room, and how they are to be initially used, on the basis of the kind of learning activities she wants to foster.

For example, it is not enough to create a math area filled with concrete math materials. The teacher must think through her goals and decide what kinds of math experiences are appropriate for these particular children at this particular time. This, in turn, means thinking through the kinds of activities that might interest these children. If the math area is to permit a wide range of interests and accommodate a wide range of ability, the materials must provide for different activities and levels of complexity.

Such a view of materials suggests that the teacher must know much more about math materials than she would have to know if she were teaching directly from a math text and only needed to stay one or two lessons ahead of the children. If, for example, she puts Cuisenaire rods in the math area, she has to understand the various ways in which the rods can be used; the same is true if she is going to use attribute blocks. She also needs to view these materials as fair game for unorthodox uses. For if children are encouraged to explore on their own, and to ask their own questions, they may use conventional materials in unconventional ways; and these novel ways may lead to even more effective learning than the expected ways!

CRITERIA FOR RESPONSIVE USE OF MATERIALS:

The following criteria are listed to help you determine whether materials are being used in your class as effectively as possible.

1. Materials are accessible, neat, attractive and logically stored so that children can get them, care for them and put them away.

2. There is a variety of materials that includes several levels and learning styles. Materials thus take into account the reading/writing level of children in that classroom.

3. Materials are not stereotyped or biased. Different cultural perspectives on issues, events and situations are presented. There are opportunities within materials for children to reflect on and critique various media, authorities and traditions.

4. Decisions about materials are shared by teachers and children. Decisions include kinds of materials, how they will be used and how stored, displayed, etc.

5. Materials are relevant to the everyday world of the specific children in that classroom. Current sports, movies, TV and the particular interests of the children are reflected in the materials used for learning.

SOME MATERIALS FOR READING/LANGUAGE

For reading, an area of the room free from interruption that has good lighting and ample space for bookshelves should be chosen. If bookcases or shelves are not readily available, they can be built by the class. Brightly painted wooden crates or scrap lumber supported on bricks make effective bookshelves. Books should be displayed attractively on the shelves. Book ends can be supplied by the children: interesting rocks, shells, dolls, wood, pieces of sculpture and so on are appropriate.

The reading area should include a variety of books on different topics and at varying levels of difficulty.

There should be some basal reading, some general books and some paperbacks; some of which have been brought by the children, some by the teacher and some of which have come from libraries. Paperbacks are particularly appropriate, since they offer an inexpensive means of enlarging the classroom library and providing additional copies of books that several children may wish to read simultaneously.

When choosing books to include, attention should be paid to the length of the various books. Some short books that can be read at one sitting are essential for younger children.

In addition to books, there should be magazines, pamphlets and advertising catalogues. A mail-order catalogue is interesting reading for children of almost any age. Even outdated catalogues can be used for comparative studies of fashions and prices during different periods. Certain magazines such as Popular Mechanics are popular in upper grades, as are copies of newspapers. In some classes comic books may be acceptable. A section on poetry is essential. It should include a variety of kinds of poetry: humorous verse, anthologies of miscellaneous poems and volumes by single authors, limericks and so on. Books of riddles and puzzles are popular too.

The area should also provide space for children's work and class collections. Some books may be allowed to circulate and a sign-out procedure may then be necessary.

The choice of furniture for the reading corner depends upon the use to which it will be put. There may be a round table where a few children can sit and read, as in a library, or a corner may be arranged for lounging, with a piece of carpeting on the floor, some pillows and even a comfortable upholstered chair or small couch. An old piece of carpeting and cast-off furniture can generally be obtained without difficulty. The class can help make slipcovers for the furniture. Pieces of carpet can be stitched together to make a rug.

Usually an escape area is required for children who sometimes need to be alone. If at all possible, there should also be several smaller reading areas in the room large enough for one or two children. It may be better to place an upholstered chair in a quiet corner where one child can curl up and read by himself. There should also be some squares of carpet (discontinued carpet samples are available from carpet dealers) and some stuffed pillows that a child can take to a quiet area to read.

Later, as children work on their projects, an Indian tipi, a castle or a cave large enough for a child to crawl into in order to read quietly can be constructed.

The teacher will want to be aware of which books are being read and which never come off the shelves. It is better to begin with fewer books and to add others gradually than to put everything out at once. It will also be necessary to add books about new interests: baseball in the spring, football in the fall, ecology, mythology and so on. Children will, of course, use the school library as well.

Particularly in the earlier grades a listening center is an important adjunct to the language area. There children may use a tape recorder with individual headsets to hear books read to them. There are many commercial tapes available for this purpose; they are coordinated with books, so that the child can follow the story in a book as she listens to it. The teacher may occasionally tape a "surprise" story for the children, either with or without an accompanying book.

SOME MATERIALS FOR WRITING

The writing area, like the reading area, should be placed where there is minimum distraction. It should contain some desks placed side by side or a table. The writing corner should be stocked with paper of various colors and shapes (short pieces for one-paragraph compositions, long and narrow pieces for "tall" tales), pens, pencils, rulers, magic markers, crayons and felt-tipped pens to illustrate stories. There should also be magazines as a source of cut-out illustrations. An ample assortment of dictionaries, both printed and homemade, is essential. A typewriter, if available, will enhance this area.

It is important that there be a colorful resource box that includes suggestions for many different kinds of writing:

- Story starters
- Directions for writing cinquains, haiku, limericks
- Poetry starters
- Directions for writing business letters and appropriate stationery with envelopes for mailing

- An address file including addresses of publishers of children's books, elected officials (most of whom will reply to mail received from school children) and of companies that offer free materials to schools.

- A file of possible pen pals.

- A posted note from the teacher: "Put a 'P' on your paper if you're especially proud of it and put a o symbol in the corner if you're willing to have your paper read out loud."

The writing corner should also contain bulletin boards for displaying children's work. Work that is to be exhibited should meet certain standards. Although spelling errors may be overlooked in daily creative writing in choosing pieces for display, the author should usually be asked to rewrite it to correct his or her errors. The sensitive teacher will, of course, be conscious of what each child is capable of doing and of each child's need to exhibit some work of which he or she is proud.

*SOME MATERIALS FOR MATH**

In Responsive classrooms, regardless of the age level of the children, the math area will stress active involvement in learning math rather than paper-and-pencil exercises. The math area for younger children should contain some such structural aids for computations as Cuisenaire rods, blocks and Unifix cubes. There should be materials to provide opportunities for experience in applied math: measurements of surface and weight, money and time; sorting and classification; counting; graphing and so on.

These materials should include scales and weights. Postal scales showing ounces, fruit-and-vegetable scales and scales for weighing people are all excellent investments. Any number of materials can be weighed, classified and sorted: bottle caps, pegs, sticks, nuts, bolts, buttons, acorns and so on.

For other measurements, rulers (in both centimeters and inches for older children), string and a trundle wheel (which measures distance) should be included. Tangrams, attribute blocks, geo boards (preferably made by

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*See:
Natividad DeAnda, Teaching Math Responsively, San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development 1979.

the children), a cash register for organizing a store, paper money and possibly some pennies, dice and playing cards (for charting probabilities) are also useful. There may be areas other than the math area in which children engage in math activities. For example, some may explore liquid measurement at the sink or with a large tub of water outdoors. Others may fill different-sized containers with sand.

*SOME MATERIALS FOR SCIENCE**

Organizing a classroom science area or center simply as an area in which to display pretty shells or interesting rocks should be avoided. Like the math area, the science area should permit children to become actively involved with materials. Depending upon the ages of the children there should be magnets, bulbs, batteries, wires, test tubes, inexpensive microscopes, lenses, seeds and the like. Hamsters, guinea pigs, chameleons, gerbils, rabbits, mice and other animals are popular and make enlightening studies possible. Their sizes can be measured at regular intervals, they can be weighed before and after feeding, they can be bred, and different aspects of their behavior can be charted. Fish, terrariums and plants may also be included in the science area. The selection of additional materials will depend upon the particular interests of the class.

*SOME MATERIALS FOR CULTURAL PLURALISM ACTIVITIES***

The life experiences of diverse groups of children must be integrated on a daily basis using a variety of intellectual and affective climates and materials. Experiences with a vast array of different cultural materials (of which food - Ethnic Cooking - is only one) facilitate the growth of social consciousness. A program and its accompanying materials can be built around the acceptance of the ethnic and cultural background of each child and the differences in children's life styles.

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* See Jean Monroe, Science in the Responsive Education Program, San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1979.

**See Florence May and the Development Staff of the Responsive Education Program, Multicultural Learning, San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, in press.

If the children speak different languages, classroom items should be labeled in each language and artifacts should represent a diversity of cultural contributions. Similarly, books, newspapers and media from a variety of perspectives should be present for child-analysis and pictures of each child and her family should be available as well as maps, folklore and folksongs from various cultures.

SOME MATERIALS FOR OTHER ACTIVITIES

In addition to reading, writing, math and science areas, there will undoubtedly have to be provision for other activities, including art and craftwork - paint, clay, embroidery threads, printing materials, potting tools and infinite kinds of materials for collages and any other appropriate supplies should thus be available. Some of the following materials and activities may also be included according to the children's ages:

- Play house
- Puppet theater
- Sand play
- Water play
- Woodworking
- Post office (for issuing stamps and delivering mail)
- Store
- Drama corner with dress-up materials appropriate for all age groups (frequently inspiring creative writing and musical composition)
- Newspaper office
- Junk constructions
- Music center
- Game center (with both commercial and homemade games, as well as materials for constructing games)
- Repair shop
- Weather station
- Cooking and baking
- Foreign-country booths
- Travel center (with books to help children to plan detailed trips that they would like to take)
- Career center (with information on many different careers)

- Television corner, with material for constructing mock television sets
- Puzzles, brain teasers and codes
- Sports desk
- "Plan a country" area, with materials for constructing communities, maps and so on, so that students can place their country somewhere on earth, detail its topography, history, customs and the like
- Research center
- Bank (for printing currency and handling class finances)
- Costume-design center
- Machine shop
- Bookbinding center (including fabric, wallpaper samples, contact paper, cardboard, construction paper, masking tape and glue, so that children are encouraged to bind the stories that they have written or collections of poems and reports, which may then become part of the class library).

MATERIALS-TO-SCROUNGE LIST

To Teachers, By Teachers, For Teachers

The Teacher Resource Service, New Orleans, Louisiana, suggests the following as a beginning list of materials for classroom use which you can rescue from your garbage can or scrounge from local businesses. Add your own ideas and share the wealth (and the work of collecting) with other teachers. Start a central resource area for scrounged stuff. Ask children to contribute!

1. Household items you might be throwing away every day (well, maybe not every day...)

egg cartons
cardboard tubes
plastic containers (margarine tubs, bleach bottles, squeeze bottles, etc.)
juice cans (from small frozen type to large readymade type)
meat and produce trays
strawberry boxes and baskets
bottle caps
corks
aluminum pie tins
styrofoam packing material
coat hangers
magazines
sturdy boxes

corrugated paper and cardboard
buttons
spools
ribbon
yarn, string, rope
old clothes (dresses, socks, costumes)
old stockings
hats
jewelry
eyeglasses
Christmas or Mardi Gras beads and trinkets
fabric and fabric scraps
old greeting cards
wrapping paper
broken appliances with moving parts (e.g. clocks, radios, fans, etc.)
electronic equipment scraps
plumbing pipe
popsicle sticks
old toothbrushes
rug and carpet pieces
egg-shaped containers from "L'eggs" pantyhose
wood scraps and pieces
any usable paper, poster or cardboard
candles and wax
rubber bands
nails and screws
paper bags and plastic bags
maps
durable containers
foam rubber
envelopes
brown envelopes and manila folders (new or used)
chicken and turkey neck bones (boiled, bleached and dried)

2. Things you may no longer need or which you might want to donate out of the goodness of your heart

large appliance boxes or crates
boards
bricks and concrete blocks
old furniture (especially desks, lamps and shelves)
wallpaper (leftovers and wallpaper books)
rugs
pillows and cushions
fabric and felt
wire screen and chicken wire
baskets
rulers, yardsticks and tape measures
leftover paint
kitchen utensils

all sorts of paper products (crepe paper, used or new paper cups and plates, tissue paper, "Contact" paper, etc.)
paste and glue
tape
staplers, staples and paper clips
scissors and paper cutters
sewing patterns
books (especially children's books)
records
musical instruments
tiles and linoleum squares
straws
games and puzzles
clay
natural and found objects (e.g. flat stones, pine cones, feathers, driftwood, rice, beans, etc.)
carbon paper
ditto stencils and paper
crayons
pencils and pens
tools (hammers, saws, screwdrivers, etc.)
sewing machines
record players
typewriters
orange crates
toys (old or new)

3. Items to be scrounged from businesses and institutions

Airlines: plastic cups (used are OK), packing boxes

Art supply stores and stationery stores: leftover or damaged paper; any leftover or damaged stock (e.g. paint, pencils, paper clips, staplers, staples, markers, etc.)

Architects: blueprints and blueprint paper; slide rules and other tools

Billboard companies: pieces of billboards to use as posters, wall coverings, etc.

Building supply compaines: wood and lumber, tiles, wallpaper books, color samples, leftover formica

Bottling firms: bottle caps, large cardboard tubes

Churches: old candles

Container companies: large cardboard sheets, damaged containers - sturdy and of uniform size

Contractors: lumber, pipes and wire, wallpaper, linoleum, tiles, molding wood, wood curls

Department stores: stocking boxes, lingerie boxes, fabric swatches, rug pieces, corrugated packing cardboard, packing boxes from appliances and pianos, styrofoam packing materials, decorative displays, old posters and business forms (blank on one side), shoe boxes, envelopes, etc.

Dime stores: boxes, leftovers or damaged packs of crayons, leftover toys, school supplies

Drug stores: small plastic bottles, crayons and other school supplies

Electric power companies: wire, large spools, assorted packing materials

Furniture stores and factories: large packing boxes, packing material, fabric scraps and swatches

Garment factories, clothing firms: buttons, decorative tape, ribbon, yarn, trim, spools, fasteners, fabric scraps, etc.

Gift shops and boutiques: candles, packing boxes, styrofoam packing material, wrapping paper, ribbon, etc.

Grocery stores, supermarkets, outdoor markets: cartons, packing materials, fruit crates, large cardboards and materials from displays, discarded display racks, styrofoam fruit trays, baskets of any sort.

Hardware stores: sample hardware books, sample tile charts, linoleum samples, rope, chain, wood, molding strips, etc.

Ice cream stores: three-gallon ice cream containers

Leather craft companies, pocketbook, belt and shoe manufacturers: scrap pieces of leather and lacings

Lumber companies: scrap wood, damaged bricks, concrete blocks, doweling, wood curls, etc.

Offices of any sort: discontinued business forms and posters (anything blank on one side), pencils and erasers, office furniture, file cabinets, lamps, typewriters, envelopes, manila folders, large brown envelopes (used are OK), etc.

Paint stores: any leftover paint, samples, sample books, wallpaper books, end rolls of wallpaper, tiles, linoleum, etc.

Paper companies and printing companies: endcuts and damaged paper and posters (blank on one side) - any size, weight or color

Phone company: colored wires, old telephones, large spools

Plastics companies: trimmings, cuttings, tubing, scrap plastic and plexiglass

Plumbers and plumbing supply companies: wires, pipes, tile scraps, linoleum

Repair shops: unclaimed appliances (preferably working, but non-working are OK too) - record players, typewriters, sewing machines, radios, TV's, clocks, fans

Restaurants: ice cream containers, corks, boxes and cartons, bottle caps

Rug companies: any leftovers or scraps, sample swatches, end pieces from carpets

Textile companies: color samples, any scraps or pieces

Tile and ceramic companies: leftover or damaged tile, etc.

Toy stores: damaged products, packing materials, boxes

Upholsterers and tailors: buttons, scrap material, spools, cord, string, etc.

4. Other cheap, but rich, resources

flea markets

moving, garage and rummage sales

nature treasures from the mountains, woods, beach, fields (weeds, cones, seed pots and pits, etc.)

PART III: DEVELOPING AND MANAGING RESPONSIVE LEARNING CENTERS

CHAPTER ONE:

DEFINITION AND PURPOSE OF RESPONSIVE LEARNING CENTERS

Responsive Learning Centers (or R.L.C.s) are organizational procedures for integrating or bringing the curriculum together in a meaningful way so that it is not segmented into reading, science, math, etc. and so that children may learn many skills within one context. R.L.C.s are designed for helping children to make choices and work independently, both individually or in small groups.

In R.L.C.s children learn the skills and rewards of working by themselves, and the teacher is freed to observe and work with individuals and small groups. A Learning Center does not necessarily have to be a place; rather, it is a series of teacher and/or child-initiated problem-solving tasks, among which there are choices of ability levels and modes of expression that allow children to gain the skills, abilities and concepts they need. Although Centers are usually located within classroom learning areas, they may be contained in folders, boxes, on a table, on the floor; they may need to stay in one place or they may be movable, depending on the materials needed to do the tasks.

The elements of an R.L.C. include:

- objectives that children understand
- rules/directions/materials needed
- task choices that include: problem-solving at a variety of levels and with a variety of media
- integration, assessment and records kept by children and teacher

An R.L.C. is focused on child needs and interests and may be developed by the teacher alone or by the teacher and child (or children) together.

Some purposes of Responsive Learning Centers are:

- to provide children with opportunities to experience as much control as possible over their own learning
- to teach, reinforce and extend basic skills
- to give children experience in making choices (after the teacher has helped them assess their needs and identify their interests)
- to allow children to work at their own pace
- to provide experience in working independently without constant teacher direction and supervision
- to provide experiences in working in a variety of groupings
- to provide a variety of resources for solving problems

One group of Responsive teachers defined the value of Learning Centers as:

- kids can work without the teacher
- kids can build internal controls
- kids can discover things on their own
- kids can guide themselves, becoming their own counselors
- different kids learn different things where there is more than one acceptable way of doing things

The same group identified some process skills children could learn from working in Centers. These include:

1. sticking to a focus
2. completing activities
3. finding materials they need
4. knowing where and when to ask for help
5. knowing what they like and don't like
6. thinking about what they can get done within various time periods

7. using their own creativity
8. extending their willingness to take chances
9. becoming more flexible in work habits
10. handling interactions with each other productively
11. practicing reading, writing and math, etc. skills

Another group of teachers identified specific reading skills in their district curriculum guide that could be built into Learning Centers. They were convinced that Centers could focus on such comprehension skills as:

1. recalling details of printed (or taped) material
2. locating answers to specific questions
3. predicting answers to specific questions
4. identifying sequences
5. gathering facts
6. interpreting and following printed (and oral) directions
7. using synonyms, antonyms, homonyms
8. finding the main idea

They also felt that Learning Centers could help children acquire such critical reading skills as:

1. differentiating between fact and fiction
2. predicting
3. relating printed materials to personal experience
4. making inferences

And, such creative reading skills as:

1. illustrating stories with art media
2. dramatizing stories and story parts
3. adapting stories to one's own experience
4. creating novel endings for a given story

> comes out of them is not of high quality. My main concern is that if I just whip something out in the form of a Learning Center, the kids just whip some work out in return (to please me). I also have a problem in scheduling who works in Centers when, as not all kids are ready to have complete free choice. I'd rather spend group time on a theme or unit by getting the kids to help plan it; and to establish criteria for finished products.

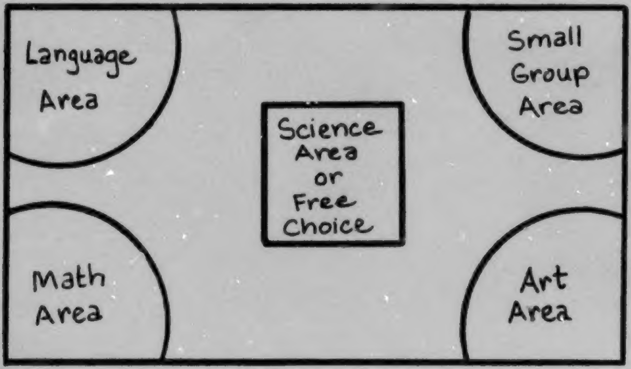
This teacher poses some issues which are widespread in schools and have become the general foci for this section:

1. How can a teacher create Learning Centers that do not take an inordinate amount of time and energy?
2. How can a teacher be sure children are learning something and producing quality work in Centers?
3. How can a teacher schedule use of Centers so that children stay or focus and work at their own independence level?

Before addressing these issues, however, the nature of Learning Centers must be explained in more detail.

WHERE DO WE FIND RESPONSIVE LEARNING CENTERS?

Learning Centers are found in just about any place in the classroom. Most of us are familiar with such classroom areas as:



Although the Responsive Education Program supports many ways of organizing classrooms, the Learning Center approach is favored, since it is one viable, concrete way of helping children become more independent learners. Learning Centers offer opportunities for children to practice decision-making skills without constant teacher direction. Within Centers, the child can set his or her own focus, make his or her own choices among several tasks, work alone or with a group, solve his or her own problems and assess his or her own work. It is important to realize, however, that Responsive Learning Centers are not:

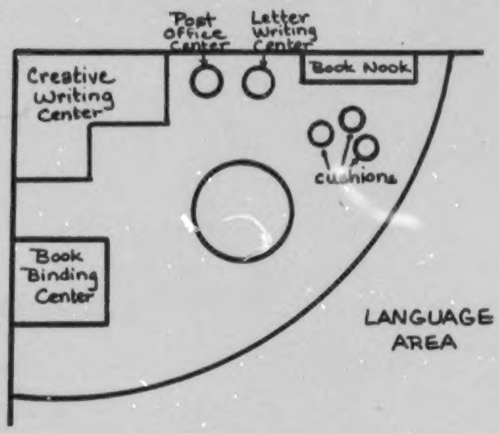
- replacements for group discussions and teacher-led experiences
- places for children to go as rewards for finishing assigned work
- places for children to play games quietly while the teacher works with a reading group
- tables that contain workbook pages from reading/math/writing/science curricula
- places where a small group of children works on the same assignment for 20 minutes and then moves on to the next center when a bell rings or lights blink
- always planned by the teacher on a pre-determined basis to teach an isolated skill

It is the purpose of this section of the guide to present Learning Centers as one possible format for organizing a Responsive classroom. It is our hope that the reader will adapt the ideas presented here to his or her own needs and to the needs and abilities of specific children, knowing that Learning Centers do not "make" a classroom Responsive, and that the absence of them does not make the classroom non-Responsive.

We would like to note here that the concept of Learning Centers has been around for many years, and there are multitudes of "how to" books on the market. Some teachers have tried Learning Centers and continued to make them more in tune with their own and children's needs; other teachers have "tried" them and given up. One teacher illuminates some general problems with centers in the following statement:

> My experience gives me a real bias against Learning Centers. They take a lot of time and effort to set up, and I'm not sure the time/energy is worth it. The children's work that

Learning Centers are not synonymous with these areas. For example, a language area may have several Learning Centers within it: divergent thinking, creative writing, book reports, book binding, language games. Centers vary in physical size and format from those which are portable and can be put in a shoebox or manila folder to those that involve the use of tape recorders, ear phones, loop projectors, etc. There is infinite variety in the way a teacher and children can set up centers within an area.



VARIATIONS IN RESPONSIVE LEARNING CENTERS

Some Learning Centers are teacher-initiated and developed in order to give children practice in specific skill work (e.g. the teacher has noticed that children need practice in computational skills, so she provides problem-solving tasks that involve adding and subtracting: "You have $3.50 to spend at a grocery store, study the ads in this week's paper and write a shopping list that totals $3.50."). Or, the teacher has noticed that the children could use some divergent thinking tasks in order to come up with more creative ideas in class meetings, so she provides work sheets on squiggles and flexible thinking (see the Activity section in this part of the Guide.)

Some Centers spring from small group and/or class discussions that a teacher begins, either from his own interest (music), from something he's heard the kids talk about (electricity), or from a district-mandated curriculum (multiethnic, family studies). Such Centers may help children develop one or more skills in an integrated way. In these instances, the teacher will probably have a motivating discussion (e.g. the theme is "Family Roots" and the teacher brings his own baby pictures, talks about his "ancestors" and involves the children in small or large group discussions about family trees). Children and teacher together may generate some possible Learning Center tasks within such a small group or total class discussion. Independent work might occur in Centers after these discussions.

Other Centers are generated by children's spontaneous ideas and may develop one or more skills in an integrated way. These Centers originate from children and probably are the most difficult for a beginning teacher to manage. However, after practice with teacher-originated Centers and experience with children's ability to come up with their own ideas, many teachers are able to plan with and build upon the directions children offer.

One way to organize our thinking about Centers is to categorize them as follows:

1. In specific/single-focus, short-term Centers, children make small decisions about tasks. These Centers are quite easy to develop since they take only a limited amount of teacher time and energy. They add surprises and "pizzazz" to skill development as well as providing opportunities for children to work independently, to make their own decisions and to choose their own tasks. It needs to be emphasized that even these small Centers need to include the basic elements of an R.L.C. (see the first few pages of this section) if children, teachers and parents are to be clear about what is being learned.

   The ideas for these Centers may come from (a) teachers and/or (b) children.

   a. Teacher-initiated, single-focus Centers usually result from teacher ideas gathered from reading, attending concerts, movies, theater, etc., watching TV, grocery shopping and/or from listening to children and watching what they keep in their pockets. One teacher noticed children carrying "decks" of "Wacky Packages" stickers. (They got them with their bubble gum at the 24-hour Short-Stop or 7-11 stores.) Instead of confiscating those stickers, which were similar to baseball cards, she decided to use them for learning. She devised some problem-solving and discrimination tasks which utilized what the children were already interested in.

b. Child-initiated, single-focus Centers sometimes arise spontaneously. For example, as mentioned in an earlier section of this Guide, in a third-grade classroom, two girls began their own "mail service". They put up a sign, "Leo and Jus, Inc...Order your mailboxes and envelopes here." The girls had actually created their own Learning Center and all the teacher did was to support it by:

- helping the children set up rules and directions
- building in some small group discussions on letter writing
- adding some formats for writing personal and business letters
- providing for integration and assessment:
    - How many letters did you write to your friends?
    - What kind of letters did you enjoy receiving?
    - Why is letter writing important to you? To others?
    - Would you like to write more letters?
    - What other letters could we write
        - to our school librarian,
        - to our principal,
        - to our school board,
        - to our congressmen,
        - to our relatives?

2. There are also longer-term, multi-focused Learning Centers that arise from teacher and/or child-initiated themes or units. These Centers, which develop many skills in an integrated way, usually evolve from discussions with large or small groups of children as new concepts are introduced and probed together. In order to ease the teacher's load, larger, more complex Centers may incorporate the ideas generated by children's discussions and brainstorming sessions. (See the Appendices for a discussion of "branching" techniques.)

a. A teacher-initiated, multi-focused unit might be on "Family Roots". If the teacher feels that the children need more practice in writing letters and interviewing people so that they can gather information from relatives, the letter writing Learning Center would be a logical place for children to learn skills involved in questioning, formatting letters and addressing envelopes. Another Center could focus on drawing pictures of and writing stories about Aunt Hannah and Uncle Henry, etc. In addition, the teacher and children can decide whether to have a "Family Roots Center" all in one place or to have the letter writing, family portrait and story Centers in the language and art areas.

b. A child-initiated unit might be on electricity. In one classroom, the original idea sprang from the children as they worked in the "Secret Code" Center and began to talk about telegraphs and Morse Codes. The teacher might build on this interest and help the children decide what they wanted to know about electricity. The creating of projects such as those described in ESS (Batteries and Bulbs) would help children develop many skills (researching, gathering materials, predicting, recording, analyzing, decision-making, etc.) in an integrated way.

The important point here is that a variety of kinds, sizes and shapes of Centers are appropriate in Responsive classrooms. Some "Biggies" and some "Little-ies" add variety; some teacher-initiated and some child/teacher-initiated are all useful in order to accommodate a variety of needs, interests, styles and independence levels. The smaller Centers may offer relief from the more extensive tasks of other projects and often are helpful for introducing young children to the concepts of independence and choice-making. The following matrix presents the preceding notions graphically.

Variations in Responsive Learning Centers

	WHO INITIATES CENTER CONTENT	
CONTENTS OF LEARNING CENTERS	Teacher originates idea/concept/skills to be developed; teacher creates the task within each Center.	Child and/or teacher originates idea; children and teacher together create the tasks within each Center.
Some Centers have: - Specific/single focus - Short-term involvement - Children making small decisions/choices among tasks Elements: - Child outcome objectives - Rules/directions/materials needed - Tasks include problem solving variety of ability levels variety of media - Integration/Assessment/record-keeping	E.g.* 1. How Long, How High, How Wide? 2. Making Patterns 3. Writing Down How You Talk and Feel 4. Mind-Stretchers 5. Come Tell a Tale 6. Finding Attributes	E.g.* 8. Wacky Packages (Eviltime) 9. "High on Sunshine" 10. Secret Codes
Some Centers have: - Integrated/multi-foci (large concepts, units, themes) - Longer-term involvement - Children making more decisions/choices among Centers and tasks Elements: - Child outcome objectives - Rules/directions/materials needed - Tasks include problem solving variety of ability levels variety of media - Integration/assessment/record-keeping	E.g.* 7. Family Roots	E.g.* 11. Nutrition 12. Newspapers 13. Electricity 14. Postal Service

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*See the Activity sections for these Learning Center plans. They are numbered here in the order found later in this part of the Guide.

Summary

Basically, Responsive Learning Centers attempt to meet the following criteria:

1. Children participate in deciding what kinds of Learning Centers are appropriate, what materials can be included, how work can be assessed and what the rules and objectives are for Learning Center goals.
2. Problem-solving tasks/experiences are the basic content of all Learning Centers.
3. Children keep records and self-assess by expressing own ideas, feelings, learnings, individual next steps.
4. Children have choices appropriate to their ability and need among Learning Centers as well as time and work to be accomplished.
5. Children are helped to set own goals re: Learning Centers -- when they can use them, which ones, how many of which tasks to be completed, when, how they will assess work completed.
6. Flexible scheduling allows for varying levels of child independence.

In order to meet these objectives, Responsive Learning Centers move:

Away from:		Toward:
Teacher-imposed tasks	⟶	Experiences arising from children's natural curiosity and interests
Mass assignments and requirements	⟶	Choices of individualized learning tasks
All children covering the same content	⟶	Divergent kinds of possible experiences
Narrowly-stated goals	⟶	Concern with broader process goals, such as problem solving, reflective thinking, independence and decision making
A limited framework of experience	⟶	A variety of experiences that contribute to the formation of broad concepts necessary for survival

CONSIDERATIONS FOR MANAGING CENTERS SO THAT CHILDREN STAY FOCUSED AND INCREASE THEIR LEVEL OF INDEPENDENCE

Creating a Climate of Trust

A climate of trust is a necessary ingredient of classrooms where children are working independently. In order for Learning Centers and individual/group projects to "work," teachers need to trust children's behavior and their ability to learn. Children need to trust that the teacher really "means it" when she says they will be able to make many of their own decisions.

The problem is that trust is usually dealt with in the first few moments of the school year when the teacher says, "I want to trust you, and I want you to trust me. O.K., now these are the class rules and this is what we're going to do today..." Children soon discover whether the teacher really means "I trust you, we'll share as much of our lives as possible and make many decisions together," or whether she means "I want you to obey me." Some children find out that the teacher merely wants them to conform to her wishes and this has little to do with trust.

Many teachers trust all the children some of the time or some of the children all of the time. It is very difficult for a teacher to trust all of the children all of the time, as this is often an individual stance within specific situations. A Responsive perspective on this issue is for a teacher to set the rules and define the amount of freedom children will have so that children are always respected and are helped to behave and learn as independently as possible within their own ability level in all situations.

It may be self-instructive to mark the following continuum according to your basic view of children. (If the end-points of the continuum don't speak to issues that are significant to you, change them.)

Place a ✓ where you are now and an X where you'd like to be:

I think I'll have discipline and accountability problems if I let children work independently.	I think children will follow rules and contracts they've helped to make.
I never allow children to correct their own papers because they might cheat.	I encourage children to correct their own mistakes and trust their ability to learn from that process.
I don't share any of my personal feelings with children since that's not what school is about.	I trust children with my personal feelings because it helps them identify and share their own.
I have to create all the tasks, Centers and learning activities because that's my job.	I believe part of children's learning is asking their own questions, planning, carrying out and evaluating their own results.

It may also be useful to ask yourself a few other questions:

- What does trust really mean to me?
- Which children do I trust? Why? When?
- Are there children in my classroom whom I do not trust? Why? Under what circumstances?
- Do I treat children whom I trust differently from those I don't trust? How can I find out?
- Are there children who don't trust me? Why? When? How can I find out?

An Exercise in Trust-Building: Our Similarities and Differences

Objectives: To help children and teacher know themselves and each other better

To increase awareness of the uniqueness (differences) among people

To increase children's ability to self assess

To build a base for a climate of trust

Materials: Note pad and pencil for each person

Procedure:

1. The entire class or small groups sit comfortably in a circle with space to move into groups of two or three and then back into the larger group.
2. The teacher and children ask themselves such questions as the ones below. (These questions could be given in written form or orally; they could be asked one-at-a-time or all together, and children could write or think their answers.)
   - What do I like to do best in school? Least?
   - What am I good at? Not so good at?
   - What do I want to work on today?
   - What would my "ideal day" be like in this classroom? (What would I do first? Last?)
   - How do I like to work best? (Alone, in small groups, with the whole class?)
3. Ask the children to share their answers to one or more of the questions with one or two partners. (It's important for the teacher to become a partner also.)
4. Ask one small group to share their answers with the entire larger group. (The teacher or a child might record by categorizing and tallying the answers on newsprint so everyone can see the different kinds of answers--since an objective of this activity is to

increase children's awareness of uniqueness, not to increase likenesses. The teacher should model *respecting* and *encouraging* different answers, not *merely tolerating* them.)

5. After these or similar questions have been answered and the answers have been shared, ask the children if there are any other questions they'd like to ask each other or the teacher. (These questions could also be put onto task cards in a Learning Center called "This is Us" or "Finding Our Differences," etc.)

Integration/ Assessment: Procedures here could include:

- Asking children what they discovered about themselves or about a friend that they never knew before.
- Building on these discoveries by planning tomorrow's schedule. When you shared how you worked best and what you needed to work on--what did it tell you about how you need to plan your time and work?
- Focusing children's attention on the different likes, dislikes and working styles of the class. You might even explain that this uniqueness is the reason for the choices offered in Learning Centers.
- Asking children how they felt when they talked about their feelings, likes and dislikes. (Did they learn anything new about the teacher?)

SCHEDULING TIME

Time is a servant, not a master. Within a climate of trust and with learning activities that are built around children's interests, many varieties of scheduling are possible. Yet how time is spent and by whom depends upon children's present levels of independence in specific situations. A teacher may have several children who usually reach the limit of their ability to stay focused in 10-20 minutes, and that same teacher probably has several children who can press on with the same task for half the afternoon. Then, of course, perhaps two-thirds of the class is somewhere in between. Most children need continual review of the skills involved in being independent. (See Part I of this Guide.) There needs to be daily discussion of the process skills listed in the beginning pages of this section. For example,

- Since children need to learn the importance of completing their work, they could keep a tally of the activities they've completed during a day or within a week.

- To increase their willingness to take chances, children could talk about risk-taking and generate examples illustrating the meaning of "risking"; meanwhile, the teacher could chart all their insights as they share.

- With regard to handling interactions productively in small groups, the teacher could ask: "Did anyone have a problem and work it out with another person? Can you give examples of someone being considerate of you?" The children's responses could be charted under the title "Handling Our People Problems".

All of the independence issues can be assessed daily with individuals and small groups. This can be done repeatedly so that children get the message of how important these process skills are for developing their own internal controls. It is useful for the teacher to continually update his "Independence Continuum" so that he is aware of children's growth in this area and consequently can guide children in developing the skills they need. (You may want to build on the sample activities suggested for teaching independence, found in Part I.)

In order to provide a structure that will accommodate as many different independence levels and working styles as possible, it may be helpful to loosely group children in the following way:

- Very independent learners who can usually handle a large variety of choices over a long period of time.

- Moderately independent learners who can usually handle several choices over a limited period of time.

- Minimally independent learners who often can handle only one or two choices with a great deal of teacher contact.

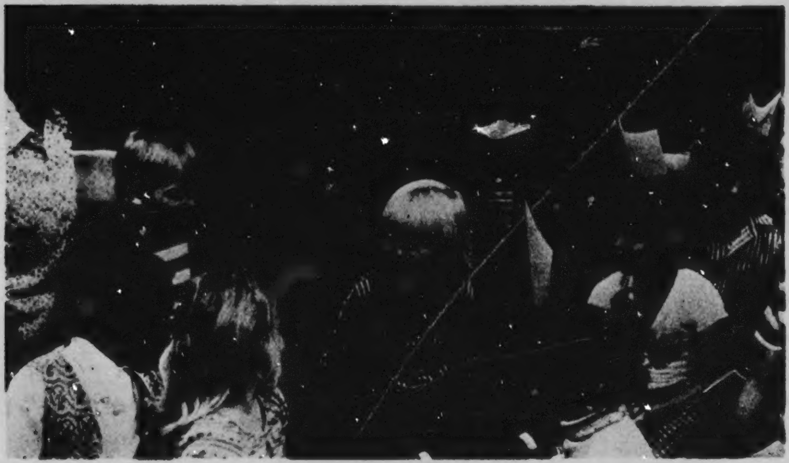
Aside from independent work, there needs to be time for all children to work in a variety of groupings:

- One-to-one interactions: Teacher/child conferences or two children working together

- Small groups of three to six persons working on a project, solving a problem, sharing work

- Larger groups of 10-15 persons discussing projects, role-playing and/or problem-solving

- Entire class meetings, parties, exploratory experiences, sharing, listening to stories, field trips, etc.



The following example of a morning schedule illustrates how a teacher can accommodate differing levels of independence in a variety of groupings. It should be noted that this is only one model from which a teacher can get ideas for scheduling Centers and "independence activities." It is not intended to tell a teacher what his class should be doing and when.

Time	Very Independent Learners	Moderately Independent Learners	Minimally Independent Learners
8:30-9:15	Work alone or in small groups in a reading area on the contracts they've set up during conferences with the teacher. Their plans could span several days of independent reading work.	Finish work begun the previous day with specific reading tasks.	Meet with the teacher in a small group for reading. The teacher builds in some discussion and/or activity about the meaning of independence. The teacher helps them identify one task that they each will do independently for a short time.
9:15-10:00	"	Meet with the teacher to practice reading comprehension skills: recalling details of stories they've read, identifying sequences, etc. They choose a new story and predict the answers to specific questions. The teacher reviews skills necessary for independent work.	Work independently on assigned tasks in Learning Centers.
10:00-10:30	"	Work independently	"
	Teacher observes children and holds individual conferences.		
10:30-10:45	Recess		
10:45-11:30	Class meeting. One part of the agenda might be for children to share the activities they've been doing so far; thus, the minimally independent learners have a chance to share as well as learn from those children who worked independently more of the time. The teacher helps them identify their successes and problems. They work out possible solutions.		
11:30-12:15	Lunch		

Figure 3. One Model for Accommodating Varying Levels of Children's Independence

Another teacher revised her present morning schedule with children's "independence levels" in mind:

Time	Very Independent Learners	Moderately Independent Learners	Minimally Independent Learners
9:00-9:20	Work in Learning Centers on contracts. They work alone, with a partner or in a small group according to the rules we've set up together.	Meet with teacher. Work on some "becoming more independent activities"; anticipate problems to solve while working alone.	
		Assigned specific choices in tasks and write out an "I will do..." planning sheet.	
9:20-10:00	"	Work on their own with a limited number of choices.	Small group work with teacher on skills; given specific assignments.
10:00-10:30	"	Work with teacher on specific skill area; evaluate their independent work; given limited choices for next time period.	Work alone or with a partner on assignments. When work is completed there are other choices (art, listening, Center, etc.).
10:30-11:00	Conferences with teachers alone or in small groups.	Work on their own.	"
11:00-11:45	Large group time for all of us: class meetings, problem-solving meetings, story time, music, etc. (those who wish to continue independent work may do so.		

Figure 4. Another Model for Accommodating Varying Levels of Independence

Many teachers have precise schedules that they have adhered to for many years. They are justified in being comfortable with the familiar. However, we have found that one way to begin moving toward providing children with more internal controls and independent activities is to ponder present schedules and generate some possible options. The following is an example of one teacher's thinking about such options. After some discussion with a Responsive Staff Developer, and with the support of several of his peer-teachers, he realized that his entire day was scheduled by him and him alone; that all activities and tasks were teacher-initiated; and he decided that he wanted to find some ways for children to initiate their own ideas and make some of their own decisions. He identified several options (third column) that would allow him to guide children toward becoming more and more independent.

Providing Independence Options

Time	Present Schedule of Activities	Options → More Child Independence
8:30-9:15	Roll call, lunch count, etc. "Board work" that provides a review of skills learned the previous day. Teacher corrects "board work".	Children sign in or one child takes the roll or makes the lunch count. Teacher conferences with individuals or small groups while others continue previous day's projects independently in Learning Centers. Children correct their own work by using teacher's manual or answer sheets. or Children correct each other's work.
9:15-10:15	Teacher has four 15 minute reading groups. When not with teacher, children do spelling seat work, reading workbooks, practice handwriting.	Make plan with advanced readers that will take two or more days to complete. Offer children "free choice reading time" and conferences with individuals. Use some "reading group" time one day a week to work on "independence as a skill" (see Activities in Part I). Use some "reading group" time to introduce children to the "Decision-making Cycle" and help them make their own plans for independent Learning Center work. Children could practice spelling words and improving handwriting in the "A Friend A Day" Center: ("Write a letter to a friend. Use all of your 'this weeks's' spelling words.").
10:15-10:45	Recess (Teacher Break)	Talk with children, listen to children, join in their games, ask open-ended questions in order to discuss what they're interested in.
10:45-11:45	Three math groups - when not with teacher, children do math seat work and workbooks.	Build math into the roll call by graphing attendance. (Do the same with lunch/milk count and birthdays.
11:45-12:30	Lunch	
12:30-1:30	Social studies, science, etc. using texts and worksheets.	Interest-focused projects in Learning Centers; teacher conferences with individuals. Class meeting where children create the agenda and practice problem-solving with classroom issues. Teacher-led small group meetings where children identify interests and class projects (see "Branching" in the Appendix).
1:30-1:45	Recess	
1:45-2:30	Free reading, clean-up.	Individual conferences. Children help set a "measure of success" for a clean room - assign tasks and committees. Children make Learning Center task cards and "ready" the room for tomorrow's work. Children choose how the last 45 minutes shall be used during the class meeting. Small-group integration of the day.

In order to accommodate the needs of children whose level of independence varies, some other teachers schedule the day loosely, and others set up a fairly tight schedule. Some examples from teacher's logs follow:

One Teacher's Log

My schedule is loose for a purpose. It depends on:

- where the children are in learning to work independently to develop various skills
- where the class "is" in a long-term unit focus; that is, does there need to be a total class discussion on the meaning of "family roots" or "electricity"?
- whether there are problems with behavior, room arrangement or comprehension of subject matter
- the time of year
- a sudden change in the weather

My general schedule is:

8:30-9:30	Children arrive and some go right to work in Centers that have already been discussed - some finish tasks and begin new ones. Other children either meet with the teacher in small group(s) that focus on particular skills (reading or math) and/or conferences (conferences _can_ be held with _more than one_ child!).
9:30-10:00	Total class meeting in which the children have helped to create the agenda.
10:00-11:00	Continuation of Learning Center work for some; small group teacher conferences; and small group skill work and sharing.
11:00-11:30	Teacher reads a story to the entire class, large-group singing, etc.
11:30-12:15	Lunch
12:15-1:00	Uninterrupted Silent Sustained Reading and Journal Writing (Uninterrupted Silent Sustained Writing) (See JoEllyn Taylor, _Reading in the Responsive Education Program_, San Francisco: Far West Laboratory, 1979.)
1:00-2:30	Learning Centers, special projects, small groups, teacher conferences
2:30-3:00	Clean-up, announcements, etc.

Another Teacher's Log

There is never a typical day, but a day might work out like this. I would get to school about 7:45 and mix paints, clay, put out some new equipment or tasks - and generally just prepare myself and the room for learning.

8:30 The children come in and some mothers too. The children quite naturally start to work in Centers. Many will continue an activity from the day before. Some will be attracted to a new Center; others read. The children feel responsible for this part of the day as they know I want to chat with any mothers that might have come. Some children want to show their mothers what they're doing.

9:00 We get started with most of the class, although some children may continue their independent work if they wish. We begin by talking informally, sometimes about school, sometimes not, sometimes about things that happened the previous day. I may also talk about things that have happened to me. I find they're fascinated by the fact that I have a life as well. They just don't believe things happen to the teacher. Then we talk about what we're going to start off by doing. Most of the children prefer to tell me what they're going to do. I don't insist on this, but I encourage it. I also will encourage the children whom I want to work a certain Center (math, reading) to go and do it. I find I don't need to do this very often since they all have their contracts. However, if I want to follow up with some form of math, for example, a small group of us might do some cooking together. I pay attention to special needs all the time. For instance, when we were talking about families and differences in ages I felt a small group could benefit from some more work. So I drew a few children together and we made borscht.

I break up my day so that sometimes I'm working with a group doing math, reading, science or social studies, and sometimes I work with individual children. I try to begin the day in the writing area, move to math and reading. I usually finish off the morning with a story. This is a good time. The children are always responsible for organizing and using their own materials and for cleaning up adequately as well. Even the younger children are capable of this discipline and it is a very necessary part of a well-run classroom.

In the classrooms just described, there is no separation of activities into skill areas and no separate scheduling of any one activity. The teacher had done much to foster the interests of the children and to open up fresh possibilities for them so that there was no need to safeguard particular "subjects" such as reading, writing or math by reserving special times for them. In addition, many subjects were integrated into Learning Centers. The children could be relied upon to choose these subjects to study with sufficient frequency and sometimes for even longer periods than they would have if directed to by a timetable. As a result, reading, writing, math and science might be going on at all times. Groups would receive the teacher's special help or stimulus at various times during the day. The only fixed time points were class meetings, P.E. and lunch.

The activities that follow are designed to help teachers prepare the children to function comfortably within schedules which allow for varying levels of independent learning.

*PREPARING CHILDREN FOR INDEPENDENT WORK IN LEARNING CENTERS**

Activity 1: Establishing Ground Rules

Instructional Objectives: To help children understand the rules and "freedoms" necessary for independent work.

To help children learn to care for people and materials.

To guide children in building the internal controls that are necessary for independent work.

Focus: It is important that children learn to take on personal responsibility for using materials wisely and for caring for others' projects. Limits need to be set clearly, at first by the teacher. Gradually, children can take on some rule-setting responsibility for new Centers. It is a wise idea to help the children understand that there is an appropriate time and place for certain behaviors that is based on reason and not on the teacher's desire to spoil their fun. (For example, if rubber bands are necessary for doing tasks that teach children about patterns at the "Geoboard Center", children need to know that snapping or shooting them across the room is dangerous. The teacher could tell children that if someone wanted a rubber band shooting contest, they could bring some bands from home and she would arrange for the contest Friday during recess.)

Procedure: The teacher clearly states the two basic ground rules for use of Learning Centers:

- You and only you have the right to take apart (mess up) what you have created.
- Each person has the responsibility to care for people and property (classroom materials).

Establishing the First Ground Rule

1. Ask three children to role-play the first ground rule. Ask each of them to create a pattern with color cubes, parquetry blocks or Cuisenaire rods (or some other appropriate material). Then ask these same three children to "mess up" their design or project. Ask them how they feel about

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*See also Part I: Activities to Guide Children in Developing Independence as a Skill.

their "mess". Ask the rest of the group to talk about how they feel when they dismantle their own project.

2. Ask three other children to create designs or pictures and ask them to "mess up" each other's creation. (Be sure to warn these three children about your plan so they won't be upset!) Again discuss these feelings about someone invading your territory.

3. Ask the entire group such questions as:

   - Does each person need a private work space that others respect? Why? Why not?

   - How does it make you feel when someone else invades your space and fools around with the project you're working on?

   - How is "messing up" your own project the same as or different from having someone else "mess it up"?

4. Discuss accidents that can occur (e.g. bumping a table where someone is making a toothpick sculpture) and stress the importance of telling the creator that an accident has happened and of offering to help fix what is "messed up".

Establishing the Second Ground Rule

1. Ask three children to again create a simple design or project and then ask them to put the materials away. (Be sure storage places for each item are clearly marked and coded.) Talk about how easy it is to forget about caring for materials when you're excited or in a hurry. At this point discuss the importance of not wasting construction paper, glue, batteries, wires, etc. Good ecology and conservation are important things to learn.

2. Then talk about why it is dangerous to throw materials. Ask children to give examples of times when pencils, erasers, rubber bands, cubes or blocks have been thrown carelessly and someone has been hit. Children should be reminded of this rule at clean-up time.

3. Ask children if there are any other ground rules they think they'll need.

Integration and Assessment: At the end of each day, for as long as you think it is necessary, ask the children how well they think each of the rules is being followed; discuss their comments if appropriate. The teacher can also observe individual children following the ground rules as they begin to explore and work in Centers and record the data gathered on a chart:

Children	Respects Others' Projects and Space	Cares for People	Cares for Materials
1			
2			
3			
"			
"			
"			
25			

Activity 2: Exploring Learning Centers

Instructional Objective: To give children opportunities to become acquainted with the range of choices available within a Center and/or among several Centers.

Focus: Every child needs time to explore the contents of Learning Centers before he or she is ready to make a choice of the activities he or she will focus on. He or she needs time for spontaneous play with the materials, whether they are batteries or buttons, before he or she will be ready to focus on a specific task. This is important, especially when the whole idea of Learning Centers is new to the children.

Procedure: At the beginning, introduce one new Learning Center at a time.

1. Ask the class (or half the class or a small group) to gather around a new Learning Center.
2. Talk about the materials that are there. Tell the children the name of each material (batteries, bulbs, current board); have them read the names of resource books or read the book titles with them and explain where each of the materials came from.
3. Show the group the pages in a resource book that explain how to do one activity.
4. Ask for three volunteers to role-play "getting started working" at this Center. The rest of the children observe three of their classmates as they explore the materials and decide what they want to work on first.
5. Ask each of the three children what they discovered at that Center. Discuss the three, probably different, ways the children began to work in the Center.
6. Introduce one new Center each day for one week, giving a small number of children the opportunity to explore each Center each day for a limited amount of time as indicated on the chart below. (Meanwhile, other children can work on regular work.)

	Day 1 Electricity	Day 2 Weaving	Day 3 Measuring	Day 4 Book Binding	Day 5 Books and Tapes
8:30-8:45	Bob, Keiko, May, Tom, Harrianne, Lita	→	→	→	→
11:15-11:30	Pete, Brent, Leona, Mike, Carol, Andy	→	→	→	→
1:00-1:15	Wynn, Stacey, Kathy, Rosie, Bill Monica	→	→	→	→
2:30-2:45	Maria, Paul, Benji, Sue, Justine, Larry	→	→	→	→

Integration and Assessment: At the end of each day, leave some time for reviewing "ground rules". At the end of the week, discuss what children discovered at the Center and their likes and dislikes and help them plan which Centers they would like to work at during their "free periods" in the following week. Continually assess learning and work habits and review independence skills. During the second, third or fourth weeks, when children are actually using task cards, confer with them individually and begin to set up individual planning forms. Allow yourself some time for observing and recording children's growth in independence skills and in general development of skills. (Don't hurry through this stage!)

Activity 3: Predicting and Comparing Amounts of Time

(Adapted from Mary Baratta-Lorton, Mathematics Their Way, Menlo Park, CA: Addison-Wesley, 1976, p. 133.)

Instructional Objectives: To guide children in comparing intervals of time

To guide children in predicting the amount of time it will take to get ready to work, to complete work, to clean up, etc.

To guide children in being able to "stick to a focus" and complete activities

Materials: A watch or a clock with a second hand, bell, time and/or stop watch

Procedure: This activity could be done with the entire class and/or a small group who especially needed to learn to use their time more productively. Begin with a discussion about the importance of using time wisely and carefully. Talk about how much time people generally spend at such activities as sleeping, eating dinner, watching TV, cleaning a room, brushing teeth, etc. Tell them that the purpose of these activities will be to learn more about how we all could learn to not waste precious time - hours, minutes, seconds.

1. Ask the children to close their eyes and sit with their backs to the teacher.

2. Tell the children to sit very still and raise a finger when they think one minute has passed. Watch the second hand on your clock or watch, ring a bell when a real minute has passed and ask one child to count how many children guessed one minute and were "right on". Follow the same procedure for intervals of 10, 20,30 seconds.

3. Children may need many opportunities to repeat this activity with varying time periods. During any one group time with this activity, the time duration should be kept constant in order to give children the opportunity to revise their sense of time and improve their prediction skills.

4. When the children are skillful at predicting one time duration, they will be ready to compare two durations. Again, ask them to sit with their backs to the teacher and have them guess if the first

time period is longer or shorter than the second time period. Each child will make a visual record of each time duration by drawing a line when the teacher says "start" and continuing it until the time the bell rings. The teacher says "start" and lets ten seconds elapse before she rings the bell. Then she says "start" again and lets five seconds elapse before the bell. The children draw:

1. ______________________________.
2. _______________.

Discuss which time period was longer and which was shorter. (The teacher should alternate the duration so that the longer period is sometimes given before the shorter and vice versa.)

Variations:

1. Ask two children to hold their legs outstretched while sitting on chairs. The rest of the children watch to see which child holds his legs up longer. Record. When the children understand this activity, encourage them to divide up into smaller groups so more children can have a chance to guess.

2. Try other activities that compare durations of time: two ice cubes melting, two "fizzies" or Alka Seltzer tablets dissolving, two birthday candles burning, two toy cars going down a ramp, two wind-up toys running down, two people tying their shoes, two spinners spinning, two lids sinking in water, etc. Children can also compare two unlike activities by predicting which will take a longer or shorter amount of time: Is it faster to zip up a zipper on a jacket or to button buttons on a jacket?; Whose shoe takes the longest to put on?, etc. In each case, children can record and compare durations by drawing lines slowly and evenly during the event .

3. Ask the children to refrain from cleaning up one Learning Center. Have them predict how many minutes or seconds it will take three people to clean it up. Record their predictions. Then ask three children to go to the Center and clean it up, and measure the amount of time they take with a stop watch or timer. Ask the children to compare their predictions with the actual time it took. Discuss.

4. Role play "getting started" with independent work at a Learning Center. Help the children define how they would know when a person was actually "at work". Again, ask children to predict how long it would take two different

people to really get ready to work. Record the predictions and check against actual time.

5. During individual conferences, ask the children to predict how long they think a specific activity will take. Ask them to record "time of day activity began" and "time of day activity was completed". Help them compare their predictions with the actual time it took them to complete their task.

6. During one clean-up time period, "time" the children's activity. Ask them to guess how long it actually took them to clean up and get ready for lunch. Record their predictions and ask them to compare their predictions with reality.

Integration and Assessment: Discuss the amounts of time it takes to do various classroom activities. Ask the children what they've learned from keeping "time-records" of their activities. See what their ideas are on conserving time, a precious resource. Talk about the activities that justify large amounts of time (reading, thinking, writing, discussing) and the activities that take up lesser amounts of time, thus leaving more time for more important things. (Note: These are also important questions for teachers to ask themselves. A specific question might be: Is the time spent on problem-solving and involving children in their own planning and decision-making more important than the time spent on having them do exercises in workbooks?) You might also want to record the extent to which children grow in using time productively.

TEACHER PREPARATION FOR SETTING UP LEARNING CENTERS: HOW TO WRITE TASK CARDS

What Are Task Cards?

After helping children understand the ground rules for using Learning Centers and showing them how to estimate the amount of time it will take to complete Center activities, teachers will find that writing assignments for the children on task cards will aid learners to work independently and begin developing their problem-solving skills. "Task", "job", "problem" or "assignment" cards are developed continuously by the teacher and children all year long. On each card or sheet of paper is an activity or problem that was suggested by the particular interests of the children in the class. Usually, these tasks reinforce or extend basic skills and abilities the children have been working on. Thus, the purpose of task cards are:

- to reinforce a particular skill or concept to which children have already been exposed
- to create a progression of learning activities that lead to the development of a basic idea
- to generate interest in a new area

While every teacher makes task cards in his or her own way, the cards will be more effective if they have the characteristics described below. (Note that while the task cards are written, they are not meant to be a test of how well a child reads.) It is thus important to:

- Keep the directions simple. If it is necessary to include new vocabulary, children may need to be helped in reading/understanding the words. It is a good idea to minimize new vocabulary words.
- Present problems on the task cards that are derived from the natural interests of the children. The cards should pose questions about the everyday world of the child.
- Keep the tasks within the capabilities of the children. A problem that is too difficult is frustrating; one that is too simple will be boring. Giving the children a choice of varying levels of difficulty and various media is crucial.

- Write the task cards in such a way that children can discover their own methods for solving the problem. Or, suggest two or three ways in which the problem could be solved.

- Pose problems that are open-ended. There may not be a single pre-determined answer, but a range of answers may be appropriate.

Other Considerations/ Ideas:

Teachers often refer to the children who can't read task cards as their reason for not using Learning Centers. Non-readers do not have to be a deterrent. Teachers can:

- put task cards on cassette tape;

- put tasks on language master cards and keep the language master itself in a central location that is accessible to all Centers;

- use rebus symbols

- explain task options so thoroughly that the materials and other children can become resources for "reading" the task cards.

Finally, as children begin to make their own task cards for each other, you may find that xeroxing the children's school pictures is a motivating device. These pictures can then be pasted on the task cards that individual children make.

At this point, we can turn our attention to the content of some specific Learning Centers. Some of these Centers are teacher-initiated (both single-focused and multi-focused); others are child-initiated. It must be noted here that, often, child-initiated means that children have come up with the idea and the teacher has built upon it to create the Center. This section thus not only focuses on the content of Learning Centers but also addresses the issue of how to gradually involve children in deciding upon their own content.

In teacher-initiated Learning Centers, the teacher uses information about children's needs and interests in order to develop the Centers. The Responsive teacher's goal, however, is to gradually move toward more and more child-initiated tasks and Centers. Part B of this section deals with this latter type of Center. Part A, which follows, includes these Learning Centers:

1. How Long, How High, How Wide? (a Learning Center on measuring length)
2. Making Patterns
3. Writing Down How You Talk and Feel
4. Mind-Stretchers
5. Come Tell a Tale
6. Finding Attributes
7. Family Roots

CHAPTER TWO:
TYPES OF LEARNING CENTERS

A. TEACHER-INITIATED LEARNING CENTERS

Learning Center 1: How Long, How High, How Wide? --Measuring Lengths

Teacher Information

All Learning Centers involve the Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning. Consequently, it is important to gather information about what the children know and to motivate children by holding a small or large group discussion during which you help them decide what they want to do, make their own plans and set their own focus. These steps are printed here at the beginning of each Center description.

Instructional Objectives: To guide children in developing math skills by looking for relationships while measuring length

To guide children in working together cooperatively

To give children problem-solving experiences

Focus: In Learning Center experiences, children can become acquainted with some of the basic ideas of measurement. They can learn to use such terms as "bigger," "lighter," "faster," "more," to make comparisons with some unit of reference. In its simplest terms, measurement means comparing magnitudes or amounts such as distance, weight, height or capacity. When such experiences occur in a natural way, arising from the interests and play activities of children, a foundation can be established for understanding measurement. Then some planned choices, in the form of problem-solving tasks, can be introduced for more specific understanding.

It is important to realize that most children seem to learn about linear measurement slowly. Children seem to progress most when they have many chances to work with concrete or informal measuring devices. It is usually futile to expect children to learn to use a ruler or yardstick effectively unless they have had many measuring experiences with ribbons, sticks, tapes, paper strips, yarn, etc.

Procedure:

- *Gathering information through discussion*

1. Before introducing the Learning Center, talk with the whole class or small groups about tall and small by asking:

   "What looks 'tall' to a giraffe?; an elephant?"
   "What looks 'small' to a kitten?; a bird?"
   "What looks 'small' to an adult?"
   "What looks 'big' to a five year old?"

   Talk about measuring with your hand. Have each child spread his or her hand and cut a strip of paper the length of his or her "hand span" (the distance between the tip of the thumb and the tip of the little finger). Label the strips and compare them. File them in the Measuring Center for use there.

   Cut yarn and other materials to size so that at least one of them is the same length as a book, height of a chair, width of a window. Encourage children to begin to use some of these materials to find out how long or wide or tall different objects are.

- *Establish a focus*

2. With the children, generate a list of all the things they would measure:

   - the length of a book
   - the width of the seat of a chair (a child's and/or a teacher's)
   - the height, width, thickness of a door
   - the width of a smile
   - the distance around a partner's head
   - the distance around a milk carton
   - the height of your stove at home
   - the distance around a playground ball
   - the distance around a bicycle wheel
   - the distance from one side of the room to another

- *Establish the experience base that children have*

3. Encourage children to measure objects at school, at home, outside. Ask the children to share and compare all the things they measured in one day - record and compare. Encourage children to make up some of their own problems. As a child named Tricia said, "Today I took the blue ribbon from the box. I found it was as long as two books and as long as the seat of my chair, and it went around my crayon box three times."

- *Involve children in learning experience*

4. Introduce the teacher-made task cards at the "How long, how high, how wide?" Learning Center. (Note that the tasks that follow these words to the teacher are listed from simple→complex.) Ask the children what task they would start with when they have time to work there.

- *Integrate the experience*

5. After several children have worked at this Center, talk with them about what they did and learned.

- *Apply new skills and experience*

6. Help them apply what they learned to another measuring task.

- *Assess growth and plan next steps*

7. Finally, help children assess their work. Have them share what they've learned and say what measuring task they could do next. The teacher can assess children's growth in math skills by asking individual children to find three things that are as long as one piece of rope. Also, record their "work" skills.

Learning Center 1: How Long, How High, How Wide?

Child Information

Objectives for Children: To measure a lot of things

To use a lot of different materials for measuring

To compare measurements with your friends

Rules and Directions: You may use this Center anywhere in the math area. Choose one task. Return the task cards and materials to their places when you're finished. Put your completed task sheet in your conference folder. Put your integration task sheet in your folder.

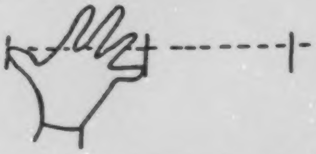
Task Choices:

Task Choice 1: Measuring With Your "Hand Span"

Materials: Various lengths of yarn, string, rope, ribbon, sticks, dowels, scissors, task cards, rulers, yardsticks and measuring tape

Directions:

- Find your "hand span strip" or make a new one like this:



- Make a list of the objects you measured. As you write in the name of each object, write in your guess before you measure the object with your handspan strip.

Object I Measured	My Guess	Number of Spans	Was My Guess Right?
1. Length of this table 2. Width of the hall door 3. Length of teacher's desk 4. Height of waste basket 5. Width of window			

- Find some other distances to measure with your hand span strip and record them on your list.
- Would you measure the length of the hall or the playground or the cafeteria with your hand span strip? Why? Write your answer on this task sheet.

Task Choice 2: Using Your Head

Materials: Same as above

Directions:

- Measure the distance around your head with a piece of string. Cut off this length. Label your string with a piece of masking tape.
  ______________Judy
- Find another part of your body that is the same distance around.
- Measure other things in the room with your "head string." Make a list like this:

Things That Are Longer Than My Head	Things That Are Shorter Than My Head	Things That Are The Same Size As My Head

- Do the same task with a string that measures your ankle, wrist, neck or big toe.

Task Choice 3: Sticks and Strips

Materials: Same as above

Directions:

- Find a partner. One person measures three objects using a stick. The other person measures the same three objects using a hand span strip. Are your answers the same when you use different measures? What could you use to come up with the same answers?

Task Choice 4: Fencing Our Garden

Materials: Same as above

Directions:

- Pretend we're going to start a garden outside and that we need to protect our garden from rabbits and curious children. Decide how big our garden will be and how much fencing we'll need.
- How much fencing will be needed to go around our garden? How high will the fencing need to be to keep the rabbits out? How will the fence be supported? How much material will we need to support the fence?
- Record your estimates and check by measuring. Share what you've found with the class at "meeting" time.

Integration and Assessment
(to be filled out by the child
on individual dittoed sheets):

My Name ______________________________
Today is ______________________________
Learning Center ______________________________

- -

Today I did ______________________________
I learned ______________________________
I liked ______________________________
I didn't like ______________________________
How well did I do my work? ______________________________
Other things I'd like to measure ______________________________

Teacher Assessment: Observe the children and have individual math conferences with them. Record each child's understanding of length and of standard measures. Record children's ability to solve problems and to work independently and cooperatively.

Learning Center 2: Making Patterns

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives: To encourage children to think creatively and flexibly.

To guide children so that they can see patterns and relationships.

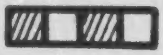
To help children learn to work independently and work cooperatively in small groups.

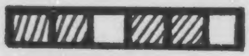
To help children learn to judge the value of their own work.

Procedure:

1. Have the children form a large group to play some clapping/finger snapping games. The teacher claps and snaps a pattern and the children join in with the rhythm: clap, snap, clap, snap, clap, snap. The teacher asks the children, "What else could we do?" The children suggest, clap, snap, bend; clap, snap, bend. The teacher continues to ask the children for ideas until they've experienced many patterns (but be sure to keep the patterns simple at first).

2. An extension of this introductory activity could be to ask the children to make a "clap/snap" pattern with Unifix Cubes:

   clap/snap/clap/snap = 

   clap/clap/snap;/clap/clap/snap = 

3. Then encourage the children to verbalize the cube pattern: "red, red, blue; red, red, blue,"etc. The children could independently build trains extending patterns as long as they wished.

4. Finally, go over the "task choices" for the "Pattern Learning Center" so that the children understand them; and be clear about when they will have the opportunity to work in the Center (see the information on scheduling in this section).

Learning Center 2: Making Patterns

Child Information

Objectives for Children: To make our own patterns with many materials

To follow other people's patterns

Rules and Directions: You may use this center anywhere in the math area.
Choose one task and complete it.
Return all the materials to their proper places when you're finished.
Sign up for a "Pattern Conference."

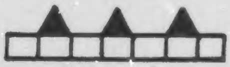
Task Choices:

Task Choice 1: Block Patterns

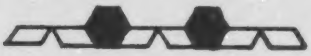
Materials: Parquetry blocks, construction paper block shapes, glue, tagboard, xeroxed pictures of each child

Directions:

- Choose two or three pattern block shapes. Stand your blocks up in a pattern you like.
- When you're pleased with your design, copy it onto a tagboard strip by gluing down the appropriate construction paper shapes.



or



- Cut out your xeroxed picture and paste it on your tagboard pattern.
- Ask a partner if he or she wants to make your design. How long can you make the design?

Task Choice 2: Junk Patterns

Materials: Beans, cones, buttons, seed pods, bottle caps, tooth picks, glue, tagboard

Directions:

- Choose junk that you can pattern by shape, color or number.
- Make a pattern with three colors or make a pattern with three shapes, sizes, etc. Glue your junk pattern onto a piece of tagboard.

Task Choice 3: Weaving Patterns

Materials: Corrugated cardboard for looms, yarn, popsicle sticks and masking tape (for "needles") (The teacher may want to pre-string the looms for younger children.)

Directions:

- Using the yarn, and if you like, some of the "junk," weave a pattern on the cardboard looms.
- Write a story about your weaving. What was easy, what was hard, what you liked about it, what you would change if you could re-do it.

(Teachers may wish to add more complex kinds of weaving for older children. Indian bead weaving on homemade looms is a great challenge. See various craft books for instructions.)

Task Choice 4: Necklace Patterns

Materials: Dyed macaroni, alcohol, covered jars, string, tagboard

(Note that this task is more fun for the children to do if the teacher has worked with a few children the previous day to dye the macaroni. To do so, place 1 T. alcohol, a few drops of food coloring and some macaroni in a glass jar, screw the top on and shake it until all the macaroni is colored. Do this with at least three colors, and spread the macaroni on newspaper to dry overnight. The teacher can then punch two holes in 1" x 2" pieces of tagboard, cut strips 36" long and tie a piece of macaroni onto one end of the string to keep the patterned macaroni from falling off the end as it is strung.)

Directions:

- Decide on a pattern of macaroni that you like and glue the pieces on one of the tagboards that has been punched. Repeat the pattern over and over again until you have a patterned necklace.
- What else can you make a pattern necklace from? (You might want to try unifix cubes, buttons, cereals, contact covered paper clips, etc.)

Task Choice 5: Natures' Patterns

Materials: Branch of leaves cut from a bush, purple cabbage, onion, apple, orange, walnut, Manila paper and three different colors of paint-soaked sponges. The teacher has cut the food into sections for painting.

Directions:

- Look at the patterns in your favorite fruit or vegetable. Think of a pattern you could make with the patterns of the fruit or vegetable.
- Gently touch your favorite piece onto the colored sponge and print a pattern on your paper.
- Write a story about your pattern. What does it make you think of?
- Decide on a leaf pattern you like (two leaves, three leaves, two leaves, three leaves, etc.). Glue your leaves onto a paper in a pattern you like.

Task Choice 6: Your Own Pattern

- Where in the room do you see other patterns?
- Do people have patterns?
- Make a patterning task for a friend.

Integration and Assessment

The teacher meets with small groups of children and asks them to tell about the patterns they made. Have them verbalize their patterns, e.g. blue, blue, red, red, red, etc., large, small, small; large, small, small; one hole, two holes, three holes; one hole, two holes, three holes, etc.; up and down, sideways; up and down, sideways, etc.

The teacher records how many patterns the child made, how complex and creative the patterns were and how well the child worked with others and shared materials and products.

Learning Center 3: Writing Down How You Talk and Feel

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives:

To guide children in writing about their personal interests

To guide children in using images and analogies

To guide children in finding new, creative ideas

To help children learn to respect different ideas as well as their own

Focus:

A major goal for each child is to grow in the ability to communicate with others. The teacher's attitude toward writing is very similar to his attitude toward reading: informal, relaxed, unhurried, supportive. The child's writing is rooted in her experiences and speaking. Therefore, the teacher encourages the child to be free and spontaneous in speaking. Children need times to share, to show, to explain, to compare, to ask questions of their peers and of the teacher. Writers communicate things that have really engaged their minds and imaginations. The emphasis here is on the personal quality of children's writing--their feelings and thoughts about being alive today. There is no such thing as a good or bad composition at this stage. There is simply a child's observations and feelings.

Introductory Experiences:

1. Initially the child dictates stories to the teacher. Later he writes stories himself in his own log or journal or writing book. He keeps a personal word book in which he writes down in conceptual or alphabetical order words he needs to know. Encourage children to write whenever they have something to say: notes to each other, agenda items on the chalkboard for "class meetings," integrations at the end of an activity or day. Also encourage children to:

    - write stories about personal experiences
    - illustrate their stories
    - keep daily logs about pets, changes in the weather, etc.
    - label equipment
    - make holiday and birthday cards
    - write thank you notes
    - listen to music, write what it brings to mind

2. Go over task choices, rules, directions and assessments for the "Writing Down How You Talk" Learning Center. Make sure the children understand their options and limitations.

Learning Center 3: Writing Down How You Talk and Feel

Child Information

Objectives for Children:	To write down what you're thinking and feeling To write/share with others To write so someone else can read it To write about "pictures" in your mind To have fun writing
Rules and Directions:	Choose two tasks and complete them. You may take any of the task cards to any part of the room, but be sure to return them by the end of the day! Complete the assessment form. Sign up for a writing conference.

Task Choices:

Task Choice 1: Writing About Our Favorite Things

Materials: One shelf or box for objects children have brought to write about (toys, dolls, leaves, books, seed pods, flowers); another shelf or box for objects the teacher has brought for writing about (feathers, pebbles, driftwood); paper, pencils

Directions:

- Choose an object that someone has brought from home that interests you.
- Look at your object carefully. Think about its colors, shapes, why you chose it. What do you see? Touch? Feel? Smell? Look.
- Write down your feelings, why this object is important to you, how you could use it, what it makes you think about.
- Put your writing in your conference folder and sign up for a writing conference.

Task Choice 2: Writing About a Visitor

(A local volunteer fireman or a policewoman has come and talked to the class about his or her work, about fire drills and fire prevention at home and school, or about crime prevention, etc.)

Materials: Paper, pencils

Directions:
- Draw a picture of the fireman or the policewoman who visited us yesterday. Write a story about him or her and his or her work. Why is the fireman important? What can you do to prevent fires? Is there anything about a fire that scares you? Why is the policewoman important? What can you do to prevent your bicycle from being stolen? What would you do if you saw someone stealing a magazine from a store?

Task Choice 3: Writing About Our Field Trip

(The class visited a local park and some children were especially intrigued with the fountain.)

Materials: Paper, pencils

Directions:
- Draw a picture of the fountain we saw last week (or anything else you especially liked). Write about how the fountain made you feel, what it made you think about.
- Share your story with a partner. How are your thoughts the same, how are they different?

Task Choice 4: TV

Materials: Paper, pencils

Directions:
- Think about the TV program you saw last week that you liked best. Why? Write about your feelings?
- Think about the TV program you liked least. Why? How would you change it? Give it a new beginning or ending.

Task Choice 5: Writing About Marshmallows

Materials: Paper, pencils, marshmallows, task cards, folders

Directions:

- Take one marshmallow. (Wash your hands before and after "exploring" it!) Look at your marshmallow. Do what you want with it. Taste it, smell it, look at it, shake it, squish it.
- Choose one or more of the marshmallow tasks and complete it. Leave your work in the folder marked "Our Marshmallow Ideas" so that other people can read what you've written and I can give you feedback.

- What does YOUR marshmallow remind you of?
- It's as white as ____________________

  It's as fluffy as ____________________

  It's as soft as ____________________

  It's as ________________ as ______________
- Write a marshmallow story. Include a description of your marshmallow and how you feel about it.
- Write some sentences about marshmallow using words that all start with the same letter as marshmallow.
- Describe what it would be like if your bed was made from marshmallows.
- Describe what it would be like if you were a mountain climber and you were climbing the highest mountain in the world--one that was made of marshmallows.
- Think of your own idea.

Other Possible Writing Task Ideas

1. Write about:

   - the color of your hair, eyes, skin
   - the color of butterflies
   - the color of the earth
   - the touch of a thorn
   - the touch of velvet
   - the smell of bread
   - the smell of grass
   - the smell of a factory
   - the sound of talking
   - the sound of sleeping

2. Listen to recordings of music. Write about what you hear. Write about what you feel and think.

3. Write something in a language only you can understand.

4. Write a story without using words.

5. Write a one-word story. Draw a picture of your story.

6. Cut a piece of cardboard into an interesting shape. Write a story about that shape.

7. Write "The Longest Story in the World" on a roll of adding machine tape.

8. Write a story without a beginning. Ask a friend to write the beginning.

9. Pretend your pet can talk to you. Interview him or her. Write down what he or she said.

Etc., etc., etc.

Integration and Assessment

(To be filled out by the child on individual dittoed sheets.)

My Name ______________________________

Date ________________________

What I did at this Center:

How I feel about what I did:

What more I need to learn and do at this Center:

Teacher Assessment: One of the most important assessment tools is having frequent conferences with the child himself or herself. For quality control of writing it is good to view mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation and messiness as obstacles to communication. The approach to each child will vary depending upon: the teacher's knowledge of the child and how appropriate his or her writing is to his or her level of understanding and verbal communication. Can he or she write about his or her interests?; Can he or she think of images?; How creative are his or her ideas?; Does he or she respect others' writings? The emphasis is not on a perfectly written product every time, but on the quality of the child's expression and its readability. Observe the child, listen to his or her reading and explanations of his or her writing and record all of this. Give him or her feedback appropriate to the situation. Most Responsive teachers feel that the best way to help a child improve the mechanics of his or her writing is not by red pencil marks or workbook exercises, but by encouraging him or her to grow more confident about his or her ability to communicate in written form.

Learning Center 4: Mind Stretchers

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives: To break mental sets by encouraging divergent thinking in the form of playfulness, humor and imagination

Introductory Experiences:

1. In a large group ask children, "Where do ideas come from?" "How do we get new ideas?" Play some games, such as "How many things could you do with this brick, this stone, this weed, this yarn." Record the children's ideas. Urge them to come up with as many ideas as possible. Take two minutes and write down as many ways as they can think of to use a pair of scissors. List children's responses. Give credit by writing their names by their ideas.

2. Explain why it's important to think of wild and crazy ideas. The teacher might then take a classroom problem, such as "We need some more private spaces in our classroom. What are your ideas for creating some neat one-person places?" Encourage the children to be as creative as possible. For example, "Dig an underground tunnel." "Build a loft," etc. Accept and list all their ideas. Be sure to put their name by their idea. Help them to see that all wild ideas may not be useful just as they are, but they may trigger new thoughts. The purpose of this Learning Center, then, is to have them expand their thinking.

3. Explain the task options at the Mind Stretchers Learning Center.

4. Do one task together.

Learning Center 4: Mind Stretchers

Child Information

Objectives for Children:
To practice wild and crazy ideas
To have fun thinking new thoughts

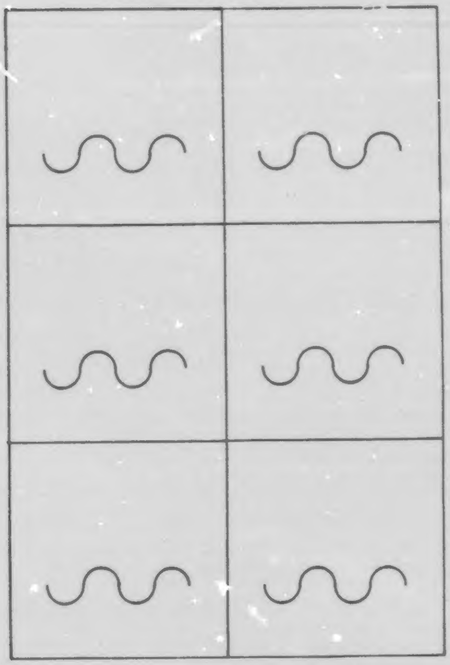
Materials: Enlarged and expanded copies of the following exercises, plus any others available

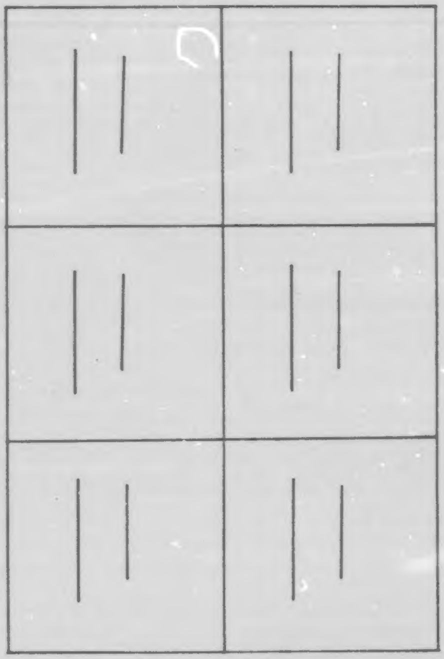
Rules and Directions: Do as many of these exercises as you wish. You may want to share your work with a partner and find out about his or her ideas and compare them with your ideas. You may work on these exercises anywhere in the room. Just be sure to fill out the assessment form and put it in your conference folder.

Task Choices:

Task Choice 1

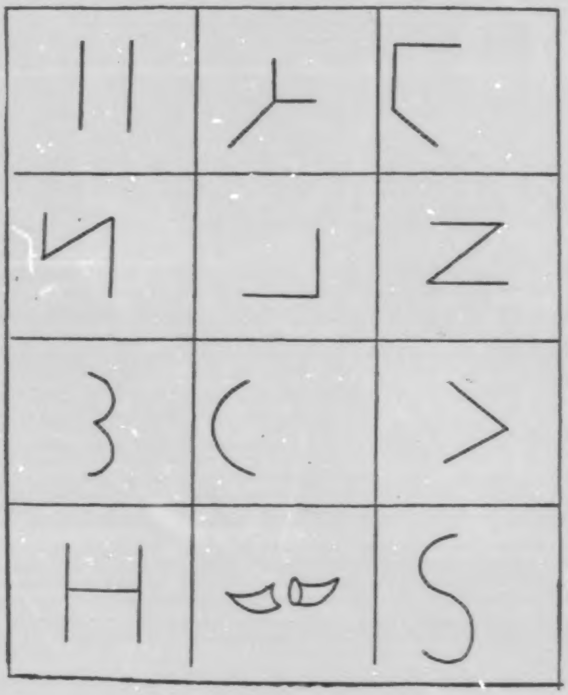
How many objects or pictures can you make from these wiggly lines and pairs of straight lines?





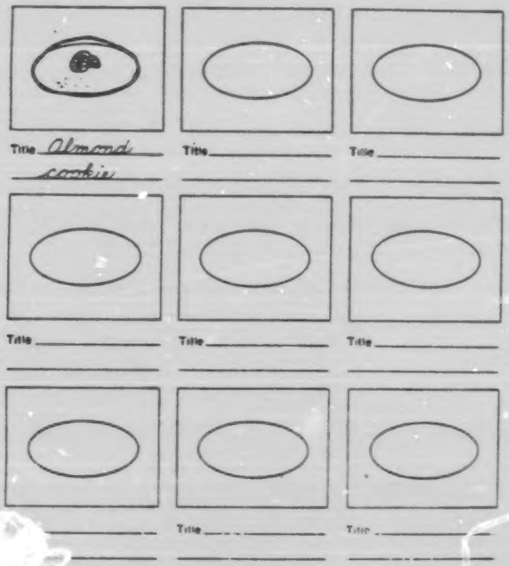
Task Choice 2

What pictures can you make from these lines?



Task Choice 3

Using these figures, make drawings of as many real things as you can think of. Give each drawing a title.



Task Choice 4

Try answering some of these questions. The purpose is to help you express how you feel and what you think.* You will make such comparisons as "How is a giraffe like a rubber band?" Your connections will tell how you, and nobody else but you, feel; and what you, and nobody else but you, know about.

To make connections you will have to think about common objects in new and sometimes strange ways. Often your connections will seem as odd as a five-legged rabbit. Sometimes they will make you laugh. Maybe it will be hard for you to find an idea that excites you. You might have to work until your head feels like a merry-go-round. Try hard! Remember, there are no "right" or "wrong" answers. Save some of your ideas and share them with a friend and/or the class during class meeting. Ask a friend to share his or her answers. How are they the same or different from yours? Can you make up a new task for a friend?

- A picket fence is like a dragon's tail because

  ____

- A giraffe is like a rubber band because

  ____

- Which takes up more space?

  A pickle or a pain

  Why? ______________________________

- Which is heavier?

  A mountain or an ocean

  Why? ______________________________

- Which is rougher?

  Yellow or purple

  Why? ______________________________

- Which is thinner?

  Day or night

  Why? ______________________________

- Which weighs more?

  Zero or one

  Why? ______________________________

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*Adapted from: Making It Strange: A New Design for Creative Thinking and Writing. Prepared by Synectics, Inc., N.Y.: Harper and Row Pub., 1976.

Task Choice 5

CONSEQUENCES

In the space below, list as many possibilities as you can of what might happen if all the metal in the world rusted solid.

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
9. ______________________________

↓

36. ______________________________

Integration and Assessment

(To be answered by the child on a separate sheet of paper.)

1. What did you learn in this center?
2. What was difficult for you? Was it too difficult?
3. What was easy for you? Was it too easy?
4. Make up a "flexible thinking" task for a friend.

Teacher Assessment: Observe children as they work at this center; review their completed work with them in a conference and assess individual abilities to generate new ideas. When there is a problem to solve in the classroom or school, have a problem-solving meeting and note the number of original ideas individual children contribute. The teacher might add a "divergent thinking" category to his or her child observation form.

Learning Center 5: Come, Tell a Tale

(Adapted from a Center conceived by Francione Lewis, Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, San Francisco, Ca.)

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives: To guide children in understanding folktales from different cultures

To help children learn to compare and respect differences in cultural beliefs

Introductory Experiences: The teacher calls a small group of children together and asks them to think about a story, song or chant that their grandparents, parents, aunts or uncles have told them. The teacher then asks the children to write down the main points (or tell it to a tape recorder) so they can share it with the group. After several sharings, the teacher asks the group what the main message of each story is. They then talk about the similarities and differences and underlying messages/values of their stories. The teacher helps the children be clear about the objectives, task choices, rules and directions for the "Come, Tell a Tale" Center.

Learning Center 5: Come, Tell a Tale

Child Information

Objectives for Children:

To demonstrate that you understand a story

To identify the beliefs that underlie the story

To compare the similarities and differences between two stories

To compare the beliefs underlying a story with your own beliefs

To know a folktale from your own and another culture

Rules and Directions:

Do all the tasks at this Center. You may work anywhere in the room. Be sure to return the Center to the Reading Area when you're finished. Do the assessment and put it in your conference folder. Sign up for a conference.

Tasks:

1. Select and read one of the stories here.
2. In your own words, write or tell what the story is about...Or...Draw two or three cartoon frames illustrating what the story is about.
3. Write the answers to two of the following questions:
    - Write down one thing you believe is very important. Why is it important to you?
    - Write down what you think the people who told this folktale believe is important. Why do you think so?
    - Do you believe the same thing that the people who told this believe?
4. Ask one older person in your family to tell you a story from his or her childhood. Tell that story to one of your friends.

Integration and Assessment

(To be answered by the child on a separate sheet of paper.)

1. What did you discover that you didn't know before?
2. What are some differences between what you believe and what someone from another culture believes?

3. What new stories did you learn from one of your ancestors?

4. What else would you like to know about folktales?

Teacher Assessment: Include information gained about children's reading comprehension in your reading records. Record the attitudes of children in their personal file.

Learning Center 6: Finding Attributes

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives: To guide children in observing similarities and differences among personal characteristics

To help children develop greater awareness of self

Introductory Experiences: The teacher discusses the following questions with a small group of children while the rest of the class is working on familiar independent activities.

- How are the six of us the same? (list on a chalkboard or large sheet of paper)

- How are we different? (clothes, hair, heights, etc.)

- Think about how we work. How are we the same? How are we different? (record)

- What is an attribute? (What are the attributes of Jenny's hair? How do they compare with the attributes of Yolanda's hair? etc.)

- Discuss the task choices and rules of the "Attribute" Center.

Learning Center 6: Finding Attributes

Child Information

Objectives for Children: To find out how we are the same or different

To learn to respect differences among us

Task Choices:

Task Choice 1: Making, Describing and Comparing My Personal Color Harmony

(Adapted from Francione Lewis)

Materials: Piles of colored fabric (range of colors in all facial colors) or pastels, crayons, etc., construction paper, glue, mirrors, lined paper and pencils

Directions:

- Take a mirror. Observe your eyes, mouth, hair, face. What colors are each? What different colors do you see in each?
- Find a piece of fabric that most nearly matches your colors.
- Glue the colors to the white paper. Make a design if you like.
- Label part of your face the fabric matches.
- Find someone in the room who has a facial attribute that has a similar color to your own. Talk to the person about it.
- Find someone in the room who has a facial attribute that is a different color from your own. Talk to the person about what you like about the difference.

Task Choice 2: Likenesses and Differences Graphs

Walk around the room (without bothering anyone) and note the hair and eye color of each person. Put each person's name in the proper column of each of these graphs.

HAIR COLOR				
brown	black	blond	red	other

Total No.

EYE COLOR				
brown	blue	green	gray	other

Task Choice 3: Investigating Hair

Some hair is long; some is short. Some hair is thick; some is thin. There are many kinds of hair. Write all the words you can think of that tell about your hair. My hair is:

____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________
____________________ ____________________

Look at one hair with a magnifying glass or microscope. Draw what you see.

Tape hair here. Draw here.

Choose a piece of someone's hair that is very different from yours. Look at this hair closely. Draw what you see.

Tape hair here. Draw here.

Here are some ways this hair is different from mine.
____
____
____
____

How many hairs do I have on my head? ____________________
Numbers of hairs I guess. __________ Number of hairs counted. __________

Here are some reasons I think I have hair in my nose and ears ______________
____

Does anyone in your class have the same numbers of hairs that you do? ________
Do girls have more hair than boys? __________
Do you get more hair as you grow older? __________

Task Choice 4: Self Masks

(This is an optional task since the teacher or teacher assistant or a parent's presence is needed. It is important that no child be forced to do this--although older children are usually most anxious to do it.)

Materials: Plasterized gauze, vaseline, water, scissors, scarf, apron

Directions: Cut the plasterized gauze into 6" by 1" strips. Cover the child's hair with a scarf and lubricate his or her face with vaseline. Soak the strips in water for a few seconds and apply them to the child's face, beginning at the forehead. Cover the entire face except the nostrils. When mask is dry (5-10 minutes), peel it from his or her face. Let mask dry overnight before painting. The child then paints his or her mask according to his or her own attributes. (This activity could lead to a study of masks from different cultures.)

Integration and Assessment

(To be filled out by the child on a separate sheet of paper.)

1. - What is an attribute?
   - What are your attributes?
   - Describe a friend's attributes.
   - What are some of the ways we in this classroom are different?
2. What did you learn in this Center?
3. What was hard and what was easy in this Center?
4. Would you like to work in this Center again? Why? Why not?
5. Would you recommend this Center to a friend? Why? Why not?

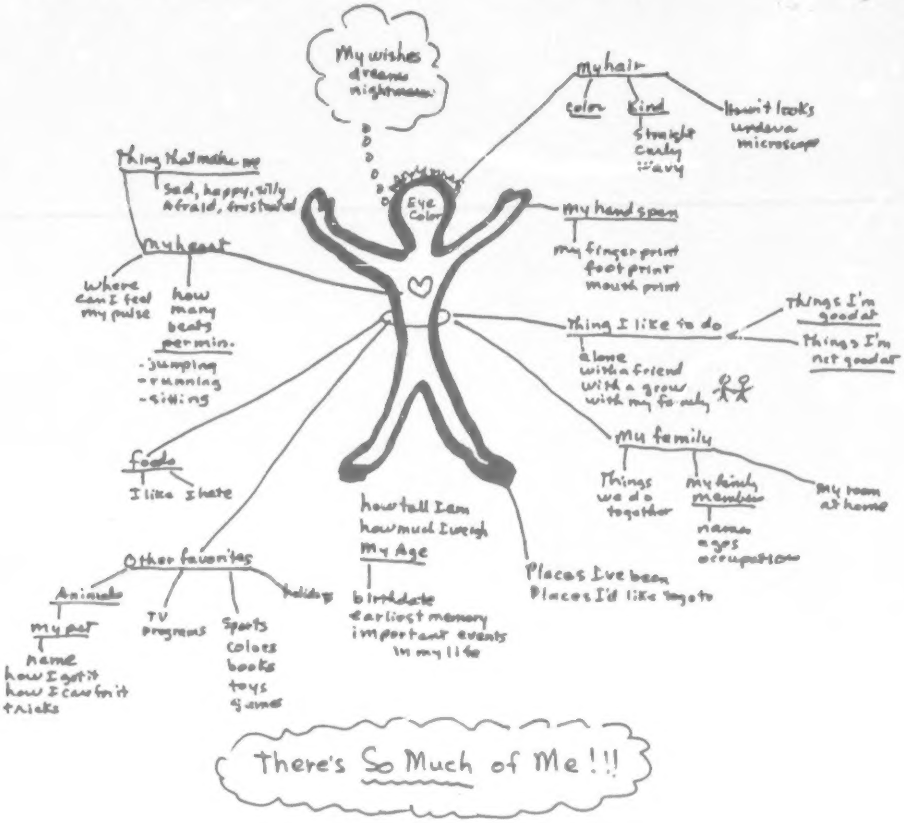
Teacher Assessment: Observe children working in this Center. Record their levels of independence and their attitude in your teacher's log. Record information gathered in conferences with children. Gather information about how much more practice children need in order to learn to respect others and themselves.

Learning Center 7: Family Roots

Instructional Objectives: To help children discover and value their family heritage

To guide children in respecting the family heritage of others

Situation: Since this is a multi-focused unit, specific Learning Centers will grow out of group discussion and exploratory experiences such as role-playing and sharing (the group experiences will be described first with resultant Learning Centers following). Please personalize this entire process and the content so that it is appropriate to your situation.



Objectives For Children: To respect myself and my family more

To gather new information about my family

To understand more clearly how I am part of American history

To identify my own family tree

Directions:

1. (Day 1) The teacher talks about his or her family tree, perhaps by sharing a story his or her grandmother used to t when he or she was a child; and/or a picture of a grandmother who was an opera singer. He or she might share his or her own baby pictures, a baby shoe, etc. A motivating discussion could follow with children sharing similar information about themselves.

   Follow-up Learning Center tasks could be:

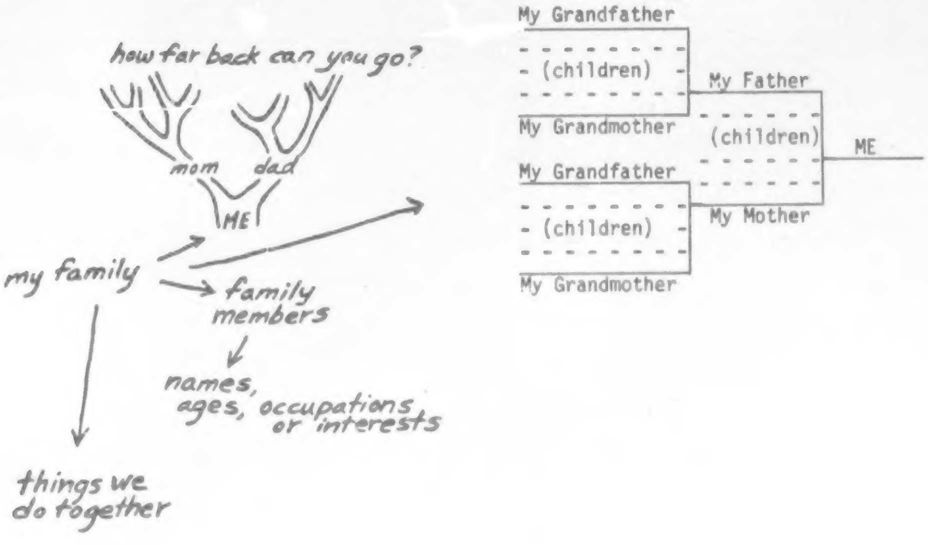
   - Draw a picture of your house and the people who live there.
   - Write or tell-a-tape story or song someone in your family has told or sung to you.
   - Draw a family portrait, etc.

   The creations made in Learning Centers need to be shared with small or large groups.

2. (Day 2) Discussion of the meaning of "ancestor":

   - What's an "ancestor"?
   - How many living ancestors do you have?
   - Where do they live?

   Two examples of ways we can record this information are: (Invent your own)



Individual depictions of "Family Trees" could be a task added to the "Family Tree Learning Center."

3. (Day 3) Discussion focuses on:

   What stories and songs our grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts, uncles, etc. have told/sung to us? What did your grandmother (uncle, etc.) do as a little boy/girl? Where did they go to school? What did they do for fun? What did they like to eat? etc.

   How can you find out how many of your "ancestors" are still alive? Homework: Ask your mother/father about your ancestors. Come with a list tomorrow.

   Task to be added to "Family Roots Center": Write a letter to your mother/father asking them for names, addresses, telephone numbers of "ancestors." (Ask your mother if she has an address book, Christmas card list, etc.)

4. (Day 4) In group(s), share lists of ancestors. Make a large class list.

   - What are all the ways we can contact our living ancestors?

     - Talk with them personally (interview)
     - Phone
     - Write letters (Christmas card address list)

   - What do you want to know about them? What questions could we ask them? Generate list.

     - Where/when were you born?
     - Where/when did you go to school?
     - What was school like?
     - What did you like best to do as a little boy/girl?
     - What was your favorite game/song?
     - Did you have TV? If not, what did you do instead?

   - Role play an interview with a grandmother. Discuss possible problems:

     - How will you tell her why you're asking her questions?
     - What if she doesn't want to talk?
     - What if she talks too much?
     - What if you can't understand her?
     - What would you do if:

       -- Your grandmother doesn't want to talk to you?
       -- How will you tell her why you're so interested in her?
       -- Your grandmother talks too much? (bores you)

   - Role play in small groups.

Learning Center task choices:

- Write down questions you want to ask.
- Write a letter to an ancestor.
- Keep a log of what your mother, father, aunts, uncles, etc. have said about the family.
- Draw pictures of your grandmother (mother) when she was a little girl.
- Make spelling lists of words about families that are new to you.
- Listen to a friend's tape recording of his grandmother. How is his grandmother similar to/different from yours?

5. (Day 5) In group(s), follow-up on whatever is appropriate. Plus, in the Learning Center, draw pictures of your ancestors; write stories you heard from them; make books of family stories, recipe books of favorite family recipes and journals or logs of answers to your questions.

Option(s):

Link "Family Roots Center" with "Folk Tales Center."

Integration and Assessment

(to be filled out by the child on a separate sheet of paper)

1. Write or dictate how you felt about our "Family Roots" study.
2. What did you learn about your family that you never knew before?
3. What more do you want to find out?

B. CHILD-INITIATED LEARNING CENTERS

Child-initiated ideas for Learning Centers often arise spontaneously and/or come from teacher observations and/or casual conversations with children. It is the Responsive teacher's role to capitalize on these ideas and build them into learning tasks. The following Center-ideas began with children and range from single- to multi-focused:

Learning Center 8: Wacky Packages: Eviltime
Learning Center 9: "High on Sunshine"
Learning Center 10: Secret Codes
Learning Center 11: Nutrition
Learning Center 12: Newspapers
Learning Center 13: Electricity
Learning Center 14: Postal Service

Learning Center 8: Wacky Packages - Eviltime!

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives:	To help children learn to observe relevant data To give children experiences in thinking creatively
Introductory Experience:	(The teacher noticed the children with Wacky Packages in their pockets, laughing about them, trading them.) Discuss the Center, its purpose, rules, directions and choices of tasks with the group (assign specific tasks to individual children as needed). Put an Ovaltine jar in any area of the room.

Learning Center 8: Wacky Packages - Eviltime!

Child Information

Objectives for Children: To practice finding similarities and differences.

To laugh while learning!

Materials: Wacky Packages stickers from Bubble Gum packages purchased at 24-hour or 7-11 Stores (if these are no longer available, adapt this Center to baseball or any kind of "hero" cards). In this specific "Eviltime" Center, place task cards inside an Ovaltine jar (this makes a handy and portable Center container).

Rules and Directions: You may take the "Eviltime" Center any place in the room you wish. Do at least two tests. You may work alone or with one or two other people. Return the Center when you are finished. Do two assessment tasks. Put all work in your conference folder. Sign up for a Learning Center conference.

Task Choices:

1. How is the "Wacky" Jar the same as the real jar of Ovaltine?
   How is the "Wacky" Jar different from the real jar of Ovaltine?

2. On your own paper draw the Real Jar and write all the words.
   On your own paper draw the "Wacky" Jar and write all the words.
   Which would you rather drink--Eviltime or Ovaltine? Why?

3. What does Eviltime make you think of?
   On your own sheet of paper draw a picture of yourself drinking Ovaltine.
   Then draw a picture of yourself drinking Eviltime.

4. What do you think Eviltime is made of?
   What do you think Ovaltine is made of?

5. Will you re-write the label so that Ovaltine would seem more delicious?
   Will you re-write the label so that Eviltime would seem more YUCKY?

6. How do you think real Ovaltine would taste? Can you tell from the label?
   How do you think Eviltime would taste? Can you tell from the label?

7. What words on the Ovaltine label try to "sell" Ovaltine? (original adult flavor)
   What words on the Eviltime label make you want to drink it?

Integration and Assessment

(to be answered by the child on a separate sheet of paper)

1. Which tasks did you do?

2. Which task did you like best?

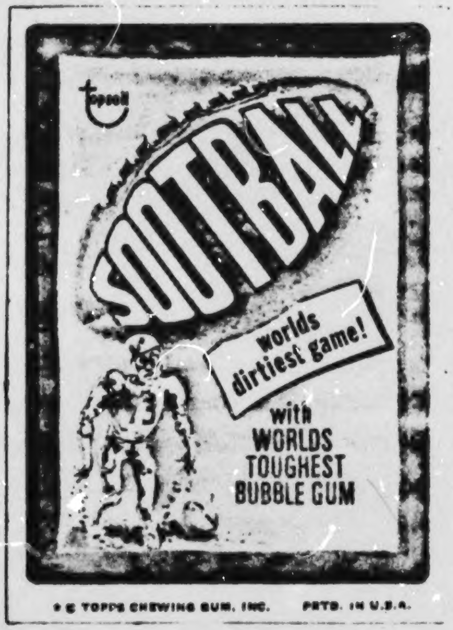
3. Share one task with a friend.

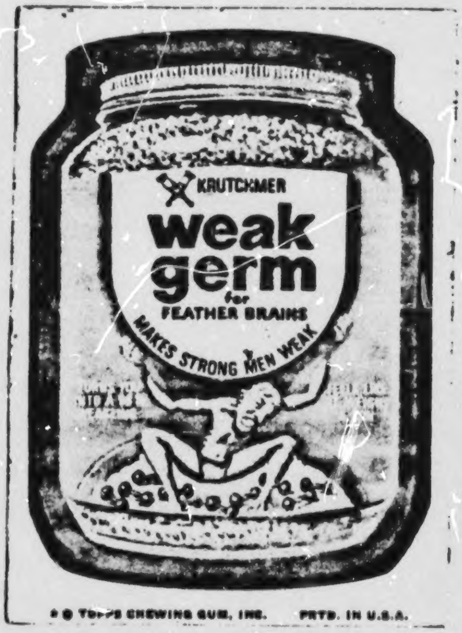
4. Would you like to do more Centers with "Wacky Stickers"?

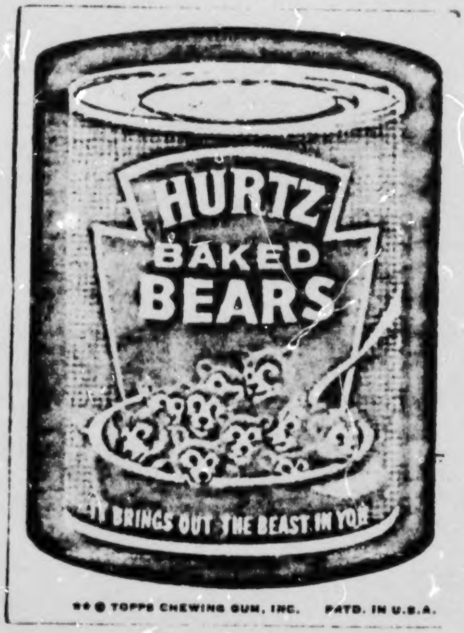
Teacher Assessment: Evaluate the child's ability to make choices, keep a focus and work independently. Add this to data gathered for a child placement or independence continuum. Add data gathered in conferences to the child's record re: his or her growth in creativity and ability to observe.

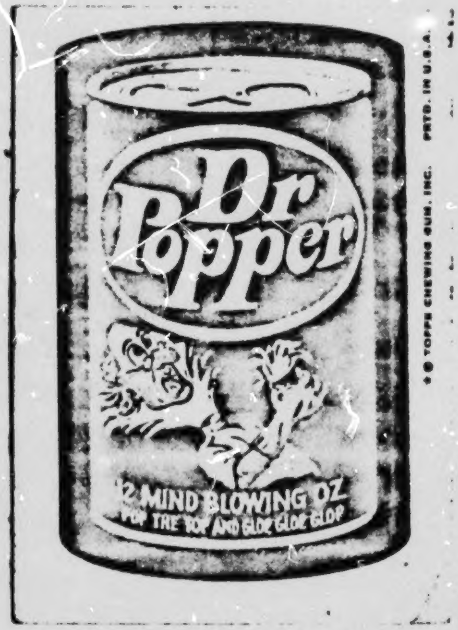
Adaptations for Other Wacky Packages Centers

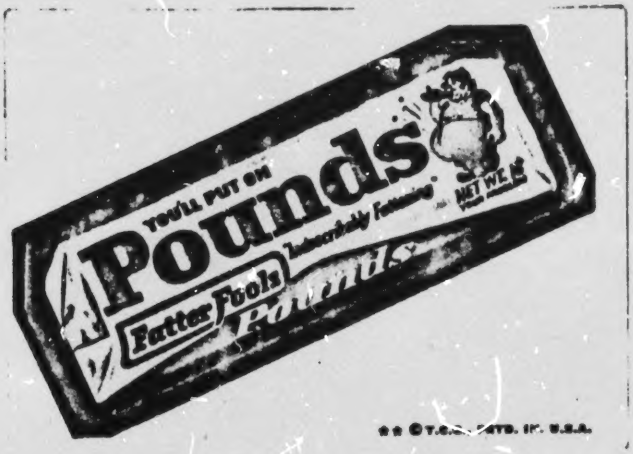
Examples of a few other "Wacky Packages" stickers.

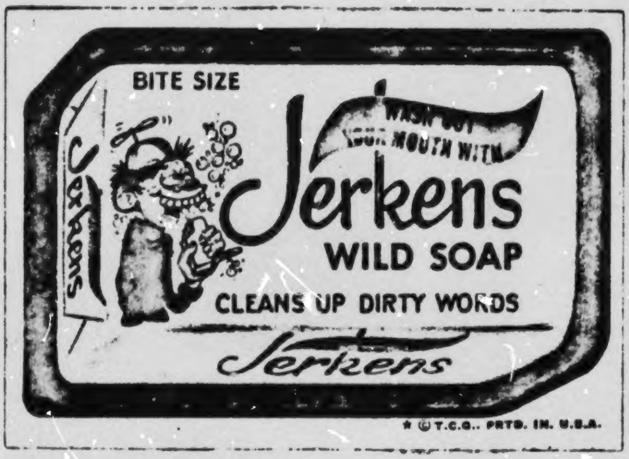

Topps
SOOTBAL
worlds dirtiest game!
with WORLDS TOUGHEST BUBBLE GUM
© TOPPS CHEWING GUM, INC. PRTD. IN U.S.A.

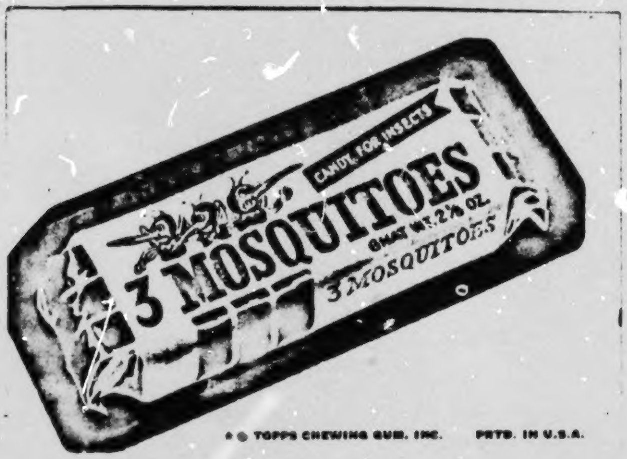



HURTZ
BAKED BEARS
IT BRINGS OUT THE BEAST IN YOU
© TOPPS CHEWING GUM, INC. PRTD. IN U.S.A.


Dr Popper
2 MIND BLOWING OZ
POP THE TOP AND GLOP GLOP GLOP
© TOPPS CHEWING GUM, INC. PRTD. IN U.S.A.


YOU'LL PUT ON
Pounds
Fatter Fools
NET WT.
Pounds
★★ ©T.C.G., PRTD. IN U.S.A.


BITE SIZE
WASH OUT YOUR MOUTH WITH
Jerkens
WILD SOAP
CLEANS UP DIRTY WORDS
Jerkens
Jerkens
★ ©T.C.G., PRTD. IN U.S.A.


CANDY FOR INSECTS
3 MOSQUITOES
3 MOSQUITOES
★ © TOPPS CHEWING GUM, INC. PRTD. IN U.S.A.

Learning Center 9: "High on Sunshine"

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives:	To link the verbal with the written message To build on children's interests
Introductory Experiences:	The teacher has heard the children singing and humming the song "High on Sunshine" by the Commodores and decides to use it for language development. With young children it would probably be appropriate to get a printed copy of the words to the song, play the song during group time and put the words on a large chart, so they could follow the printed version while they're singing with the tape. Go over follow-up task choices and any rules you may have for the Center (e.g. taking care of equipment, etc.).

Learning Center 9: "High on Sunshine"

Child Information

Objectives for Children:	To read the words to a popular song To think about what the words mean To make up a task for a friend
Materials:	A tape recording of the song "High on Sunshine" (or any current song that is popular with your children), a printed version of the song (put on a ditto sheet), tape recorder and earphones, task and integration/assessment cards

Tasks:

1. Follow the words of the song as you listen to the tape.
2. What is the song about? (Dictate your response, tape it on another tape or write it.)
3. Draw a picture of yourself singing the song and/or draw a picture that comes to your mind while you're listening to the song. (What colors do you use most?)
4. What new words did you discover while you were listening to or reading the song? Use the new words in a sentence.
5. Make up your own story about sunshine. Read or sing it to a friend!
6. Make up a task for a friend.

Integration and Assessment

(to be filled out by the child on a separate sheet of paper)

1. What did you like about this Center?
2. What didn't you like?
3. Would you like to work in another "song Center"? (What song would you like to have in that Center?)

Teacher Assessment: Observe children's level of interest in this Center; record their ability to keep a focus; discuss their personal integrations and assessments during a conference and add this information to their personal files and consider other popular songs for learning possibilities.

Learning Center 10: Secret Codes

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives:	To provide opportunities for children to work independently in an area of special interest To guide children in applying what they've learned about electricity to a new area: Morse Code To expand children's respect for other languages
Introductory Procedures:	The children have been sending Morse code messages with lights and buzzers in the Electricity Center; they also are using such "Mork from Ork" words as "Nanoo-Nanoo" and "Shazbutt." Introduce the "Secret Code" Center with a group or class discussion:

1. Ask the children to think of all the different ways people communicate (body language, non-verbal behavior, writing in many varieties of languages and dialects).
2. Show them examples of hieroglyphics; the Kumran scrolls (found in caves in Israel); character writing from China, Japan, Indochina--or anything else you or they can think of.
3. Discuss the three sample exercises and integration tasks found in the Center. Be clear about your rules for their work in the Center (when/where they can use it, how many children at a time, what time of day, etc.).

Learning Center 10: Secret Codes

Child Information

Objectives for Children:

To think about many kinds of languages (codes)

To learn the Morse Code

To make up your own code

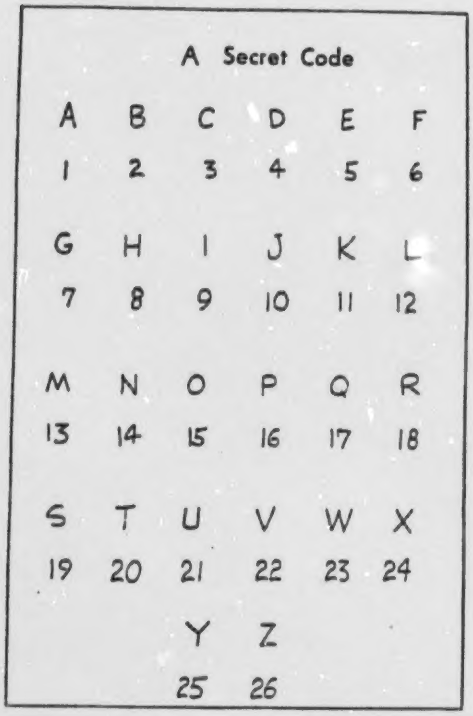
Materials: Morse Code, dittoes expanded from the attached sheets, examples of hieroglyphics and writings in other languages

Rules and Directions: Complete any of the dittoes in the Center. Share your work with a friend or the class. Complete the assessment activity and put it in your conference folder.

Task Choices:

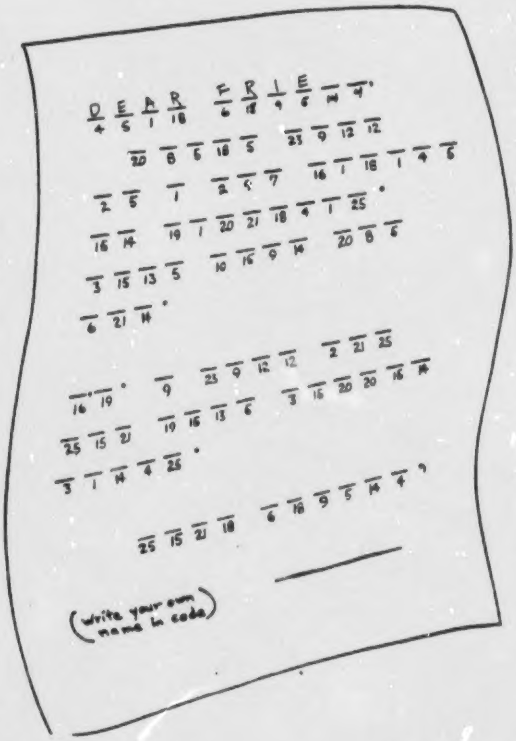
Task Choice 1

Look at the secret code and decode the letter. Sign the letter with your name in code.



A Secret Code

A	B	C	D	E	F
1	2	3	4	5	6
G	H	I	J	K	L
7	8	9	10	11	12
M	N	O	P	Q	R
13	14	15	16	17	18
S	T	U	V	W	X
19	20	21	22	23	24
		Y	Z		
		25	26		



D E A R F R I E
4 5 1 18 6 18 9 5 14 4,
20 8 5 18 5 23 9 12 12
2 5 1 2 9 7 16 1 18 1 4 5
16 14 19 1 20 21 18 4 1 25.
3 15 13 5 10 16 9 14 20 8 5
6 21 14.

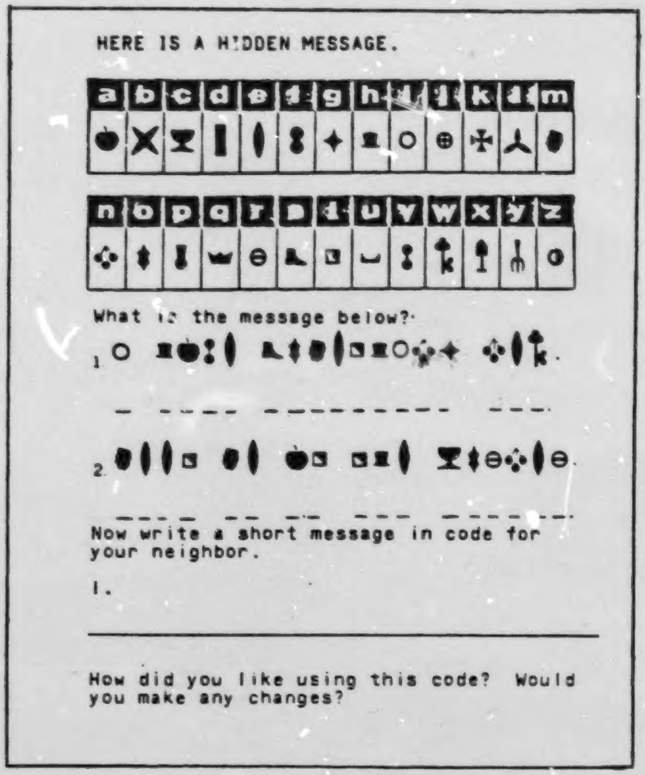
16 19. 9 23 9 12 12 2 21 25
25 15 21 19 16 13 6 3 15 20 20 16 14
3 1 14 4 25.

25 15 21 18 6 18 9 5 14 4,

(write your own name in code) ____________

Task Choice 2

This is another kind of code. Can you decode this message?



HERE IS A HIDDEN MESSAGE.

What is the message below?

1.

2.

Now write a short message in code for your neighbor.

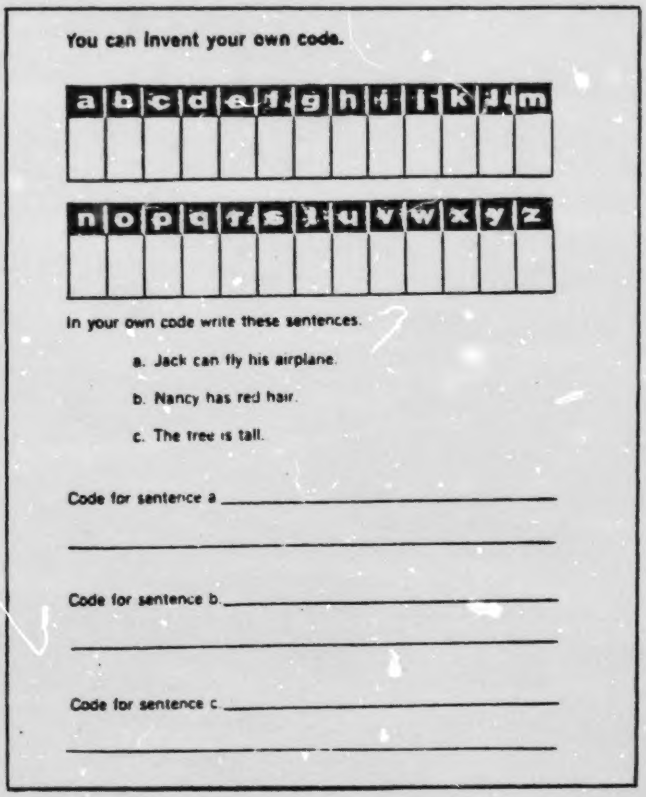
1.

How did you like using this code? Would you make any changes?

a b c d e f g h i j k l m
n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Task Choice 3

Make up your own code and send a message.



You can invent your own code.

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m

n	o	p	q	r	s	t	u	v	w	x	y	z

In your own code write these sentences.

a. Jack can fly his airplane.

b. Nancy has red hair.

c. The tree is tall.

Code for sentence a ____________________

Code for sentence b ____________________

Code for sentence c ____________________

Integration and Assessment

(Do at least two of the following.)

1. Write a short paragraph about how you feel about codes. Do you like them? Why? If not, why not?

2. Find a person who was in World War II and ask him or her if he or she knows anything about secret coded messages (share their story with the class).

3. What did you learn?
   Would you like to work on some more secret codes?

Teacher Assessment: Re-assess children's ability to work independently and with others; adjust individual children's placement on the independence continuum as appropriate. As a result of conferencing, record individual children's understanding of language as a "code-to-be-cracked".

Learning Center 11: Nutrition

(presented here with two options: a teacher-initiated Center and a Center developed cooperatively by children and teacher)

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives

To think about nutrition in some new ways

To use skills of writing and interviewing friends

To learn to read labels carefully

To chart friends' responses

Situation:

The teacher has noticed the influx in natural fiber cereals in attractive containers at the local supermarket. He or she has also noticed that the school hot lunch program is serving whole wheat hot dog buns. Some kids have responded: "Gee whiz, I like the white ones better." Other kids have loudly proclaimed, "It's about time!" It occurs to the teacher that the appearance of school whole wheat hot dog buns could be built upon by examining nutritional contents of cereals. He or she knows that he or she has some choice about how to go about this.

1. He or she could make a Center, complete with task cards, nutrition magazines, cereal boxes and taste treats and vitamin jar labels.

or

2. He or she could share the creation of a Center with the children by letting them brainstorm possible tasks, identify things they'd like to know and take some responsibility for gathering materials, setting up the space, setting the rules, objectives, etc.

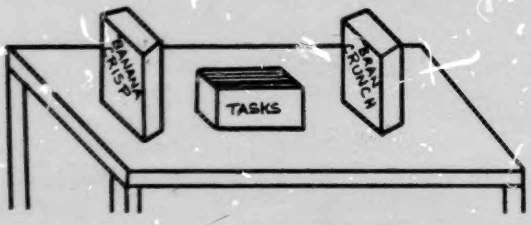
Learning Center 11: Nutrition: Crispy-Crunch Center

Child Information

Option 1:

The teacher-made Center might appear on a table like this:

"CRISPY-CRUNCH CENTER" (or "Read the Labels Center")



Objectives for Children: Same as those stated on the previous page.

Materials: Boxes of Bran Crunch and Banana Crisp cereals, task cards

Rules: Please work here at the Center. If you take parts of the Center to another part of the room, others won't be able to use them. Also there probably should only be about two or three people using this Center at one time. Are there any other rules you think we need for this Center? If so, write them here.

Directions: Choose one or more tasks. Leave the product of your task in the box at the Center. Fill out the assessment form and put it in your "Conference" folder. Tell me, please, if any of the tasks aren't clear. How would you "fix" them?

Tasks:

1. Do you like cereal? What is your favorite kind? Write (or dictate) your response.
2. Make the longest list of CR____ words that you can think of. What resources did you use?
3. List words that rhyme with crunch and list words that rhyme with crisp.
4. Write a radio or TV commercial for crunch or crisp using three words that rhyme.
5. Take a taste or a pinch of CRISP and a pinch of CRUNCH. How can you tell them apart? Can you tell them apart by just looking? Which do you like better? Why?

Which one do five of your friends prefer? Why? Keep a record. Here's one way:

	NAME	CRISP	CRUNCH	WHY
1	Kathy	✓		I like bananas and Crisp tastes like bananas.
2				

Which is the most popular cereal in our class?

6. Set up both cereal boxes so that you're looking at both backs or both fronts. What part of both boxes are the same? What parts are different? (You might want to draw the front and/or back of each box in order to compare them.)

7. Look at the sides of both boxes where the ingredients are listed. Compare the % of RDS (Recommended Daily Allowance) of the Vitamins and Minerals in both CRISP and CRUNCH. One way of comparing is to draw a chart:

	CRISP	CRUNCH
protein	___%	___%

8. Look at the "ingredient" side of both boxes, compare the calories, protein, carbohydrate and fat. What other things that we eat have high protein, carbohydrates and fat? How can you find out? For the first part of this task you might want to draw a chart.

	CRISP	CRUNCH
calories		
protein	gr.	
carbohydrates	gr.	

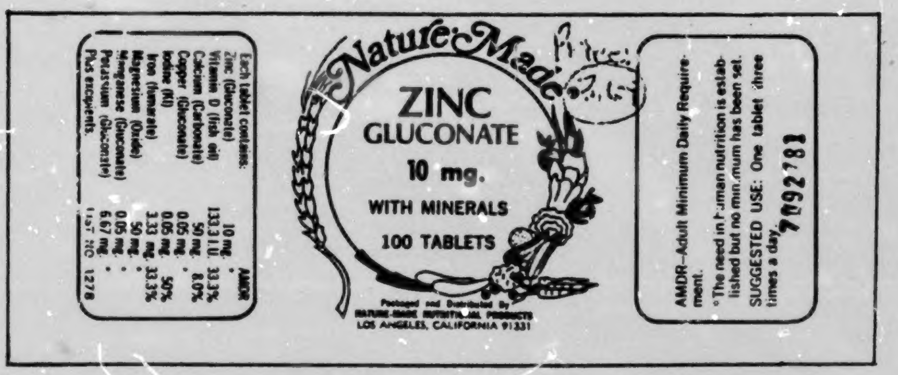
Does it matter if you eat CRISP or CRUNCH? Why?

9. Of what use are labels? How do they help us? Write a note to a friend telling him or her why he or she should read labels. Compare labels on two bottles of zinc. Which is more potent? How can you tell?

10. Why is it important to read vitamin labels?

11. What are some of the things you can find out by reading them? (Look at the following labels or find some of your own at home.)

12. What's the difference between "mcg" and "mg"? How can you find out?



Each tablet contains:		AMDR
Zinc (Gluconate)	10 mg.	*
Vitamin D (fish oil)	133.3 I.U.	33.3%
Calcium (Carbonate)	50 mg.	8.0%
Copper (Gluconate)	0.05 mg.	*
Iodine (KI)	0.05 mg.	50%
Iron (fumarate)	3.33 mg.	33.3%
Magnesium (Oxide)	50 mg.	*
Manganese (Gluconate)	0.05 mg.	*
Potassium (Gluconate)	6.67 mg.	*
Plus excipients.	1sT NC 1278	

Nature-Made

Price: 2.65

ZINC
GLUCONATE
10 mg.
WITH MINERALS
100 TABLETS

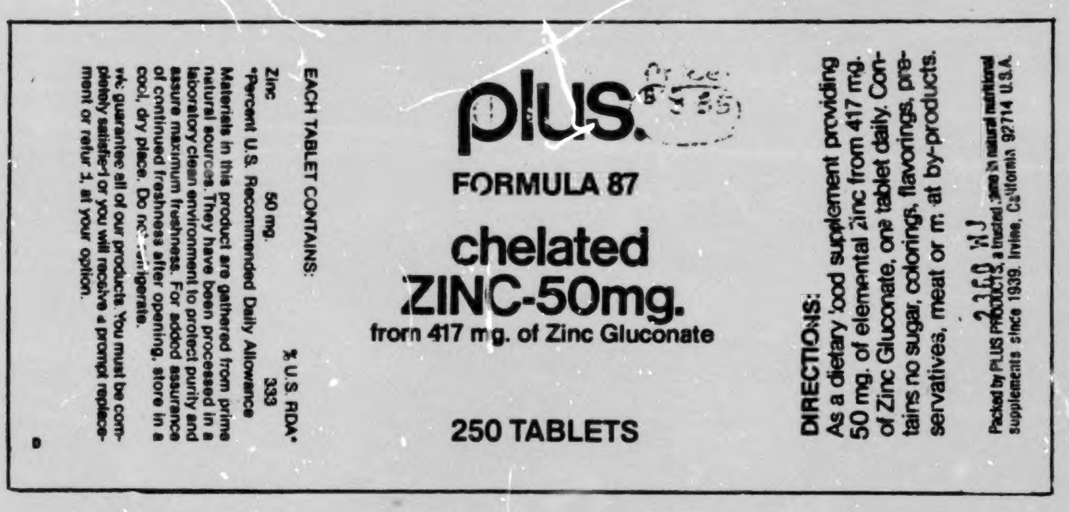
Packaged and Distributed By
NATURE-MADE NUTRITIONAL PRODUCTS
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 91331

AMDR—Adult Minimum Daily Requirement.

*The need in human nutrition is established but no minimum has been set.

SUGGESTED USE: One tablet three times a day.

7092'81



EACH TABLET CONTAINS:

		% U.S. RDA*
Zinc	50 mg.	333

*Percent U.S. Recommended Daily Allowance

Materials in this product are gathered from prime natural sources. They have been processed in a laboratory clean environment to protect purity and assure maximum freshness. For added assurance of continued freshness after opening, store in a cool, dry place. Do not refrigerate.

We guarantee all of our products. You must be completely satisfied or you will receive a prompt replacement or refund, at your option.

plus.

Price: $3.85

FORMULA 87

chelated
ZINC-50mg.
from 417 mg. of Zinc Gluconate

250 TABLETS

DIRECTIONS:
As a dietary food supplement providing 50 mg. of elemental zinc from 417 mg. of Zinc Gluconate, one tablet daily. Contains no sugar, colorings, flavorings, preservatives, meat or meat by-products.

2360 HJ

Packed by PLUS PRODUCTS, a trusted name in natural nutritional supplements since 1939. Irvine, California 92714 U.S.A.

Integration and Assessment

(to be filled out by the child on a separate piece of paper)

1. Which task(s) did you choose? Why?

2. How did you feel about your choice?

3. What did you learn about yourself? About others?

Option 2:

This teacher decided to involve the children in the creation of a Nutrition Center. She began with a discussion with about half the class. "Why do you think whole wheat hot dog buns might be better for us than white buns? or Why did the PTA ask for whole wheat buns? or Do any of you take vitamins? What kind? (list) Why? or What kind of cereals do you eat? Why? or Do you ever read the labels when you go to the store? Why?" The discussion could go in any number of directions (e.g. kinds of chewing gum, is gum good for you; how do you know; let's read some of the wrappers, etc.). The teacher could then make a list of the kinds of interests the children have with regard to any of the above and proceed to get their ideas for tasks, materials, rules, directions, assessment.

Learning Center 12: Newspapers
(a child/teacher-created Center)

Teacher Information

Instructional Objectives: To think about what we read in newspapers

To compare different accounts of the same story

Situation: The teacher had always brought his copy of the New York Times with him to school each day. He discovered that the paper most of the children were familiar with was a local weekly paper. Furthermore, he discovered that there was different "coverage" of the same news event by the two papers. Believing that this would be a beneficial discovery for the children to make for themselves, he began by setting up an open-ended, optional "Newspaper Center."

Learning Center 12: Newspaper Center

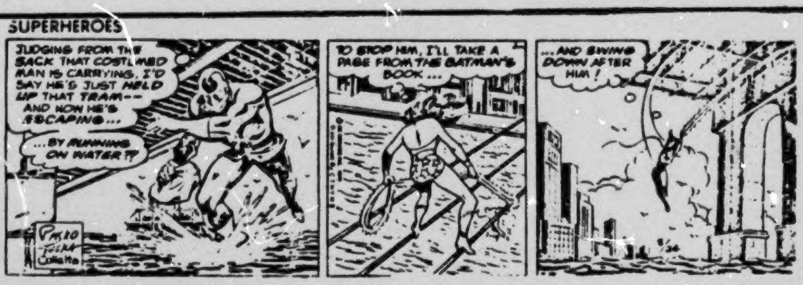
Child Information

Objectives for Children: The same as those stated on the previous page.

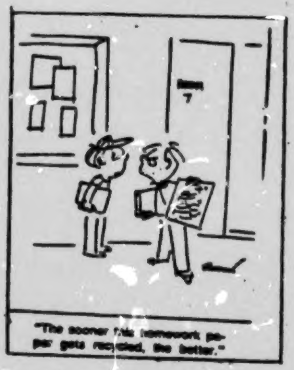
Materials: Several different newspapers (e.g. small town and large city newspapers), paper clips, 3 x 5 cards, scissors, construction paper, rubber cement

Task: Look at today's paper. Find something that interests you and that you have some questions about. Cut it out and paste it on construction paper. Write some questions about it for your friends. Sign your paper. Tack it to the bulletin board above this Center. Ask some of your friends to answer your questions on 3 x 5 cards and to paper clip their cards to your paper.

The following are examples of some of the questions children asked each other.


SUPERHEROES
JUDGING FROM THE SACK THAT COSTUMED MAN IS CARRYING, I'D SAY HE'S JUST HELD UP THAT TRAM-- AND NOW HE'S ESCAPING...
...BY RUNNING ON WATER?!
TO STOP HIM, I'LL TAKE A PAGE FROM THE BATMAN'S BOOK...
...AND SWING DOWN AFTER HIM!

1. Does most people like the Super-Heroes Cartons on a Saturday mornings?
2. How are they so strong?
3. For one thing why does wonder-women wear a band on her head and why does she wear wrist bands on her arm?
4. How does Aqua Man contact the fish?
5. What makes Supermen fly why is he so strong?
6. And how is all the other superheroes so strong and brave?
7. Do you watch wonderwoman on Fri. nites at 7pm?


"The sooner this homework paper gets recycled, the better."

1. Why did he say that?

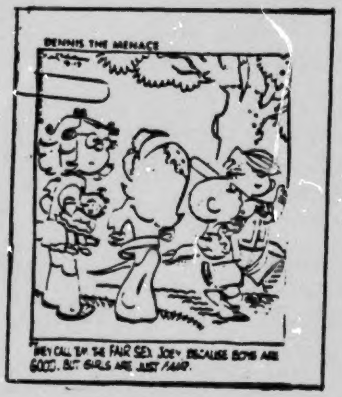
2. What is he mad about?

3. Way dose he not like homework?

4. What dose recycled mean?

5. Why did she gave him homework?

by Angie



THEY CALL 'EM THE FAIR SEX, JOEY, BECAUSE BOYS ARE GOOD, BUT GIRLS ARE JUST FAIR.

1. Why do they callem the Fair SEX?

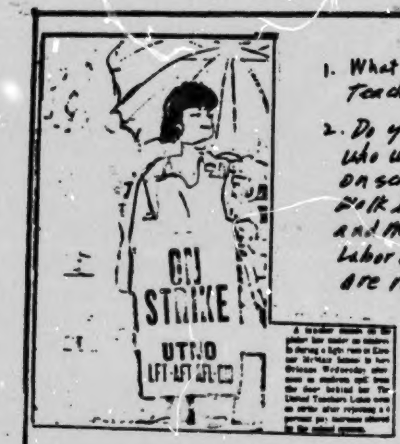
2. How would you feel it They called you that?

3. What would you do about it?

4. Why is this cartoon called DENNIS THE MENACE?

Leave your answers cliped here

by Denis



1. What do you think of a Teacher who strikes?

2. Do you think the teacher who walked the picket-line on school day, would also walk it on Saturday, Sunday and Monday (which was a Labor Day holiday)? What are reasons for your opinion?

3. What would be your feeling about our teacher it she went on strike? would she?

4. Why would Teachers strike? Why not?

5. Who get hurt most- Teachers or Kids? Give at least 2 or 3 reasons for your answer.

Integration and Assessment

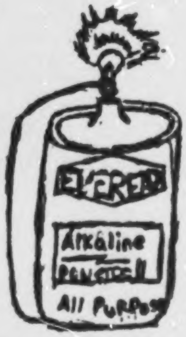
(To be discussed by children in groups and in conferences with the teacher.)

1. Did you find the same news reported differently in two papers?
2. If so, why do you think that could be so?
3. Why is it important to read the newspaper?
4. Why do we discuss the newspaper articles in class?
5. What do you like about this Center?

Learning Center 13: Electricity

(presented here with two options: a teacher-created Center and a Center developed cooperatively by children and teacher)

Teacher Information



Instructional Objectives:

To help children become involved in electricity experiments that interest them

To help children ask their own questions, and find some answers

To help children self-assess and share

To help children research and report findings

Situation: The teacher has noticed several children's interest in electricity (they were playing around with Morse Code, were very interested in a "Secret Code Center," are mimicking "I'm Mork from Ork, and I have a dot-dot-dash for you, Nanoo, Nanoo. . .Shazbutt!" This teacher informally asked the children if they'd like to study electricity and the response was positive. She could respond to this interest in one of two ways:

1. By setting up a Learning Center herself with:

   - electricity task cards
   - resource books, pictures
   - wires, bulbs, batteries, doorbells, morse code, etc.
   - rules and directions
   - assessment tasks

or

2. By involving the children from the beginning in planning the Center or area around what they wanted to know about.

Learning Center 13: Electricity

Child Information

Option 1: The teacher-planned Center might look like this:

Objectives for Children: To help you ask your own questions about electricity (What are you curious about?)

To help you do some experiments that are interesting to you

To help you say to yourself and to others what you learned about electricity (to have something important to share with others)

Materials: Dorothy Habben's Science Experiments That Really Work (Chicago: Follett Publishing Co., 1970); Elementary Science Study: Batteries and Bulbs (Manchester Mo.: McGraw-Hill); task cards, batteries, bulbs, wires, wire cutters, assessment tasks, etc.

Rules and Directions: (posted very visibly at the Center)

1. Keep the Center NEAT, put things away LOGICALLY for the next person, it may be you!
2. No burning out the batteries, dry cells. . .they're expensive to replace!
3. Turn to p. 81 of red book, Science Experiments That Really Work. Look through this part of the book and choose an experiment you'd like to do or choose one of these Tasks:
   - Make up a way to send a message to a friend;
   - Make a list of some things that conduct electricity;
   - Where does electricity come from?; What makes the bulb light, not light?
4. If you have trouble with this, work with someone who has made his or her decision about what to work on.
5. Keep a LOG of:
   - the things you do at this Center
   - the questions you're asking yourself
   - what you learned/discovered
   - what else you need/want to do
6. Decide how you will share what you've learned.

3. Make a list of what you've learned in this Center.

Option 2: This teacher decided to involve the children in planning their own electricity work.

Situation: First, she gathered information about the children's interest in and knowledge about electricity by exploring the children's past experiences with them. One day when she was on yard duty she casually asked a few kids if they were interested in elecrricity and if they'd like to spend some class time finding out some more things. She got an immediate positive response ("Oh, sure; when can we start; I've got some batteries at home; can I bring my electric train?" etc.). The teacher was overwhelmed, so she was honest and freely admitted that she didn't know very much about electricity, and had some things to find out for herself and some planning to do. She re-trenched and began to think about how to begin a unit that could truly generate energy. She also realistically assessed that surely not all of the kids could be that interested.

She decided that the next most logical step for her would be to call two small group meetings about electricity. The children would have a choice to come or work in another area of the room. Those meetings would produce much information since the teacher would find out who was really interested. Their responses to her questions:

- What do you already know about electricity?
- What would you like to know about electricity?

would give directions to the first electricity experiences. About 80% of the class came to the meetings and responded to the teacher's open ended questions in the following ways:

Teacher: We're going to do two things in this meeting. One is to find out what you already know about electricity so that what we do won't be boring to you. Second, we'll talk about what you would like to learn, build or do.

Child: Oh, I know about Morse Code and telegraphs.
Child: A built-in door bell.
Child: I know how lights work.
Child: Why don't you see/hear TV waves? How come they put our cables under the ground? How does a tape recorder work?
Child: What are radio waves?
Child: Remote control?
Child: How do you get electrocuted?
Child: Oh, that's easy--it builds up your blood pressure.

Teacher: Do you really know what it does to the body?

Child: I know about the electric chair.
Child: How does the window display at Caledonia Records work? (Later she planned to go into the record store with her older brother and talk to the manager about the mechanized window display.)

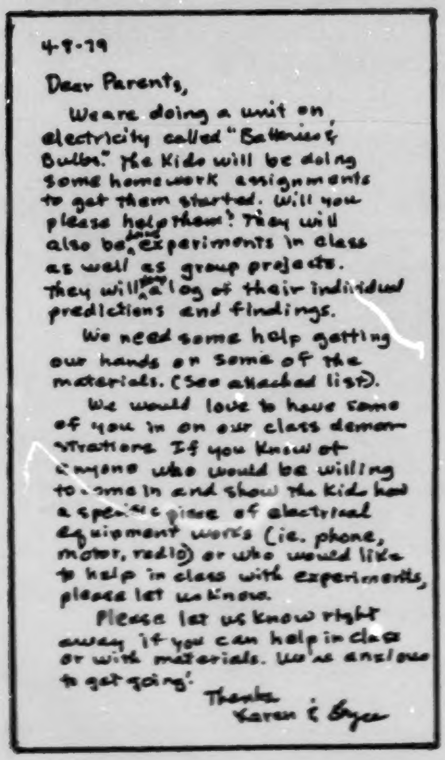
Teacher: I see we're getting at some of the questions you have. Let's start a list of what you'd like to be able to do/know about electricity. (The teacher recorded the questions on chart paper so all could see the list.)

Child: Flashlights.
Child: Sun--solar power.
Child: Transistors.
Child: Police sirens.
Child: Telegraph.
Child: Plug-in telephones.
Child: Resistors.
Child: CB radios.
Child: Doll house with lights.
Child: Christmas tree lights.
Child: Motors.

The teacher charted their responses:

Name	What I already know	What I'd like to know	Materials we'll need

The complexity of the children's interests led the teacher to meet with a colleague who had done an electricity unit before. They decided to work on the next steps together and gathered science books to read. They sent hom a letter to the parents.



4-8-79

Dear Parents,

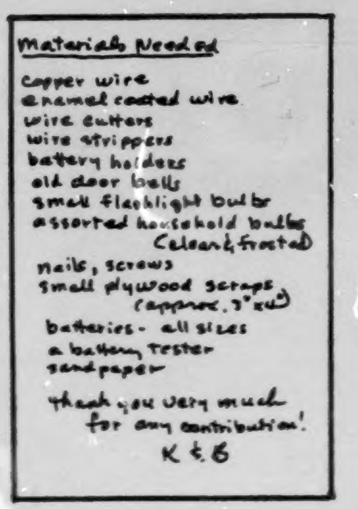
We are doing a unit on electricity called "Batteries & Bulbs." The Kids will be doing some homework assignments to get them started. Will you please help them? They will also be doing experiments in class as well as group projects. They will keep a log of their individual predictions and findings.

We need some help getting our hands on some of the materials. (See attached list).

We would love to have some of you in on our class demonstrations. If you know of anyone who would be willing to come in and show the Kids how a specific piece of electrical equipment works (ie. phone, motor, radio) or who would like to help in class with experiments, please let us know.

Please let us know right away if you can help in class or with materials. We're anxious to get going!

Thanks
Karen & Bryce



Materials Needed

copper wire
enamel coated wire
wire cutters
wire strippers
battery holders
old door bells
small flashlight bulbs
assorted household bulbs
(clear & frosted)
nails, screws
small plywood scraps
(approx. 3" sq.)
batteries - all sizes
a battery tester
sandpaper

thank you very much for any contribution!
K & B

They also asked a P.G. & E. man to come and talk to their classes the following week.

The children recorded the materials and services they gathered as a result of the letter home to parents; since the children were used to "homework" assignments, the teachers decided to make them relevant. They included a piece of plastic wrap, paper and a balloon for the homework in a plastic baggie for each child.

Electricity Homework Assignments:

(used as preparation for working in Electricity
Learning Center)

Batteries and Bulbs

Homework assignment #1-"Static Electricity"

Name ______________________

Part 1

Put a piece of writing paper on a table. Rub it flat on the table. Each time you rub it, start in the middle and rub to the edges of the paper. Rub it a lot. When you are finished, lift up one corner of the paper very slowly. Do you feel anything in the paper? Try to lift up the paper slowly. What do you feel now?

Part 2

Get a piece of newspaper. Put it against a flat wall. Rub the newspaper flat against the wall. Rub it the same way you rubbed the paper on the table. Rub it a lot. Then let it go. What happens? Try to lift the paper by using one of the corners. What happens? What do you feel?

Part 3

Take the plastic wrap. Lay it flat on the table top. Then try to lift one corner. What do you feel?

Part 4

Cut a strip of newspaper about one inch wide and 18 inches long. Place it flat on a wooden table and stroke over it, in one direction, with your fingernails. Fold it in the middle and place the fold over a wooden ruler. What seems to be happening to the ends of the strips? Can you explain why? Would the same result happen if you did not charge (rub) the strip? Try to find out.

Batteries and Bulbs

Name ______________________________ Homework Assignment #2-"Static Electricity"

Part 1

Work with someone else. Blow up two balloons. Make a knot in each balloon. Rub the balloons on pieces of clothing like a sweater, pants or a skirt. Rub the balloons a lot. Will the balloons stick to a wall? What else will the balloons stick to? Each time you try, remember to rub the balloons again. Record what the balloons will stick to.

____

____

____

____

Part 2

Work with someone else again. Using the two balloons, tie a 12-inch length of string to the neck of each balloon. Each of you should rub the balloon vigorously with a piece of wool. Then, each of you pick up a balloon by the string and let it hang. Slowly move the balloons toward one another until they are quite close. What seems to happen to the balloons? Write down what you think is happening.

____

____

____

____

Since the children's interest and questions were sparked by the homework, and since materials arrived from home as a result of the parent letter, the children and teacher had a need to organize an area in the room to house equipment, projects, books and charts (e.g. discoveries made; materials used/borrowed/needed).

The children made rules when the need arose. The children kept journals, the teacher had small group discussions when needed, and the children shared their creations spontaneously. The teacher logged all these processes:

Monday: Kids very interested in ESS book. Some experimenting homework pasted into journals.

Tuesday: Small group worked on prediction sheet. Some confusion; need more discussion. ESS book being passed around the room (much excitement). Work on projects.

Wednesday: Small group discussion on what is necessary to cause a bulb to light (using just battery, wire, bulb). Talk about convenience of bulb holder. Homework: Static Electricity

Thursday: Discuss homework. Take John, Marla, Billy and read over what's to be put into journals. Do experiment #13 with Carol, Donna, Carlos. Homework: Static Electricity

Friday: Do experiment #14 with Dan, Nancy, Heather, Elena.

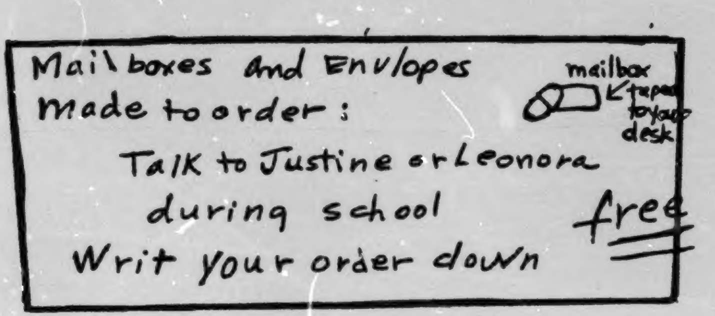
Plan Future in Small Groups

- Put out experiments
- Discuss and self-assess
- Evaluate area so far

Learning Center 14: Leo & Jus, Inc. Postal Service
(a child-initiated Learning Center)

Materials: Construction paper, felt pens

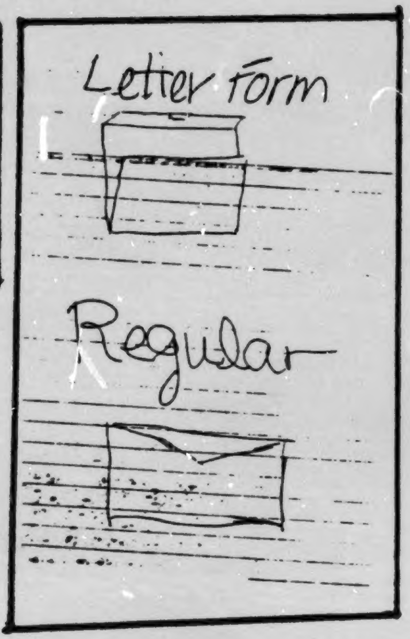
Situation: In a third grade classroom, two girls (Leonora and Justine) began their own private, non-profit enterprise. They formed a small table where they set up business with the following signs:



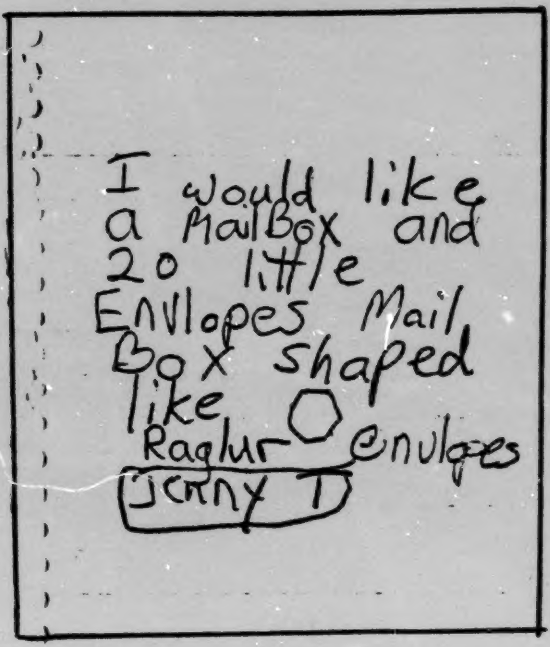
Mail boxes and Envlopes
Made to order:
Talk to Justine or Leonora
during school
Writ your order down

mailbox
tape
to your
desk
free

If you want one
write down an order.
Decide kind of form
You went - Letter form
or regular



Children flooded the two girls with orders for miniature mailboxes (of many shapes and colors, which they taped to their cubbies) and for the letter forms and envelopes:



I would like
a MailBox and
20 little
Envlopes Mail
Box shaped
like ⬡
Raglur envlopes
Jenny T

The teacher built upon this interest by discussing different kinds of letters (business, formal, informal notes, thank-you notes, etc.), and by adding some optional learning tasks to the Center. Together they assessed the "letter writing spree" and the other children thanked Justine and Leonora for their idea.

CHAPTER THREE:

INTEGRATION AND RECORD KEEPING

Teachers often resist using Learning Centers because "keeping track" of children's accomplishments seems to be such an overwhelming chore. In order to ameliorate this problem, we offer some suggestions here.

In devising a Responsive record-keeping system, teachers may consider a few guidelines:

1. Children should participate in record keeping.
2. Records should be visually simple.
3. Records should be easy to understand (not written in unintelligible code), so that others can interpret the information recorded.
4. Work that is part of a record should be dated to facilitate evaluation of a child's growth over a period of time.
5. Each record should have a clear and specific purpose; it may be unnecessary to record every task in which a child engages each day.
6. Records should not be so time-consuming that they divert the teacher from working with children.

Ideas are presented here in two sections:

1. Teacher-Kept Records
    - of individual children (anecdotes, conferences, contracts, skills)
    - of Learning Centers
    - of the entire class
2. Child-Kept Records
    - of Learning Centers
    - of personal contracts
    - of conferences

In a Responsive classroom the teacher is continually observing and recording descriptions of his observations by noting children's growth in independent work habits and skill development, e.g. how well is McKinley learning:

- To keep a focus once she has begun an activity?
- To manage her time (follow her own plan)?
- To care for others and for materials?
- To complete work that reflects her ability?
- To assess the quality of her own work (skills learned; skill-work needed)?

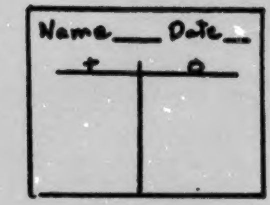
Records are important for the teacher who is helping a child see where he is in relation to his potential. With carefully kept records, the teacher can let the child know what and when the teacher observed certain behaviors. This information, shared during individual conferences, helps the child begin to make more of his own plans and decisions about what he needs to work on. Teacher-kept records also are useful for keeping parents and administrators up-to-date on children's growth.

Records of Individual Children

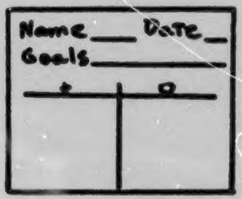
Information recorded may be: time spent at a particular task; a log of different activities the child participated in within a one- or two-hour block of time; completed task cards, books read, stories written, projects completed; contracts agreed upon, etc.

These facts may be collected by careful observing of the kinds of activities the child selects and what she avoids; how long she stays at an activity; whether she finds it difficult to settle down; how she feels about herself and her work, etc.

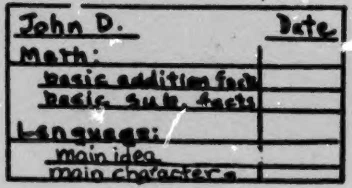
The teacher may wish to collect daily anecdotal records on 4 x 6 cards (3 x 5 cards are probably too small). These cards may be simply anecdotal (with a focus on the positive, and only one or two concerns). They may reflect general or specific behaviors. They may also include some goals for that child; what the teacher did to help him or her meet those goals; and the results. Please remember to keep these records factual (no evaluation or assessment yet!!). They also may include "wishes" for that child tomorrow.



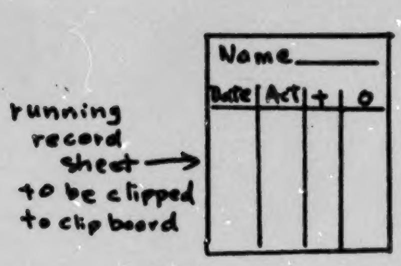
or

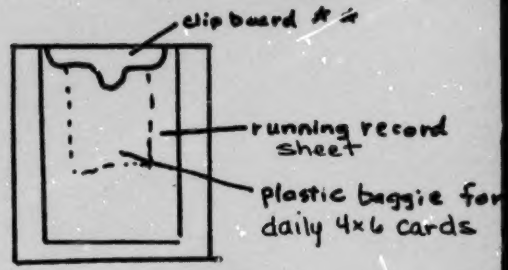


Other kinds of records reflect skill areas:



The teacher may also wish to keep a running record on each child. Try a clip-board (one per child) with a dittoed sheet for this running record. Try storing the individual daily 4 x 6 cards in a baggie clipped to the board!



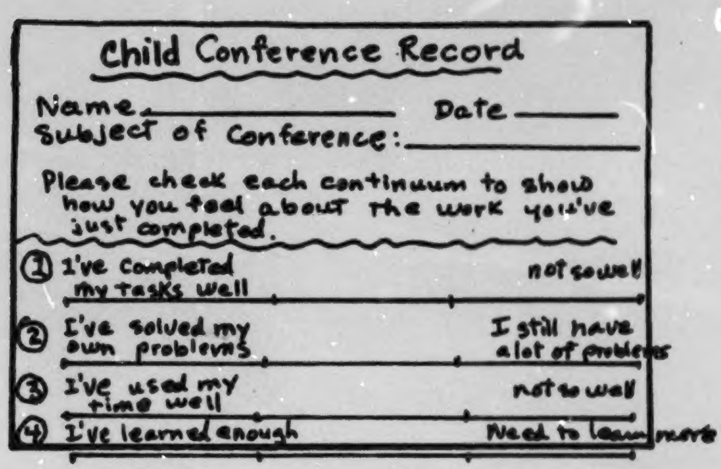


Records of Teacher-Child Conferences

The following "Conference Questions" suggest some important points the teacher may want to consider covering:

- What have you learned during the past two days at the ____________ Center?
- What tasks have you completed?
- What do you think you have done well? Not done so well?

- What did you like doing best? Least?
- What problems did you have? Do you have any problems now?
- What do you think you need more work on?
- What (the teacher) thinks the child needs more work on.
- What plans can we make together for your next steps?
- When shall we have our next conference?



Child Conference Record

Name ____________ Date ______

Subject of Conference: ____________

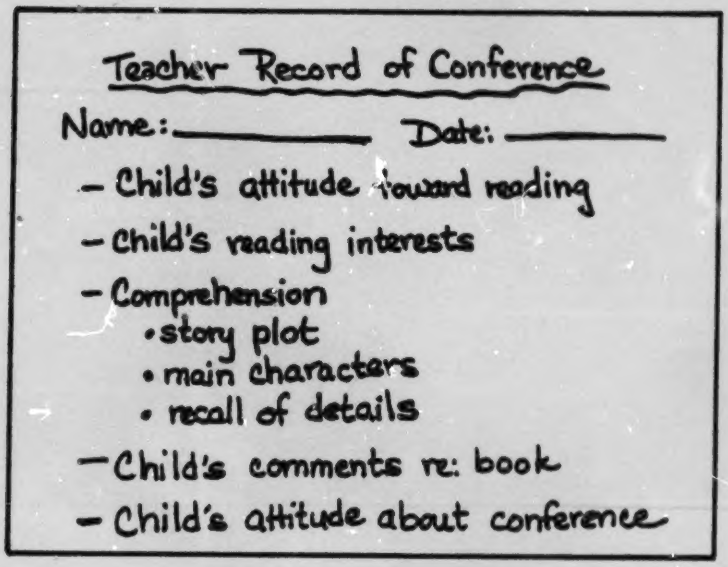
Please check each continuum to show how you feel about the work you've just completed.

① I've completed my tasks well — not so well

② I've solved my own problems — I still have a lot of problems

③ I've used my time well — not so well

④ I've learned enough — Need to learn more



Teacher Record of Conference

Name: ____________ Date: ____________

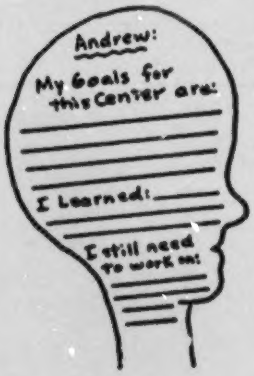
- Child's attitude toward reading
- Child's reading interests
- Comprehension
  - story plot
  - main characters
  - recall of details
- Child's comments re: book
- Child's attitude about conference

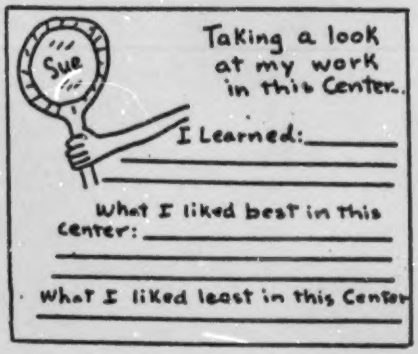
Recording Individual and Group Integrations

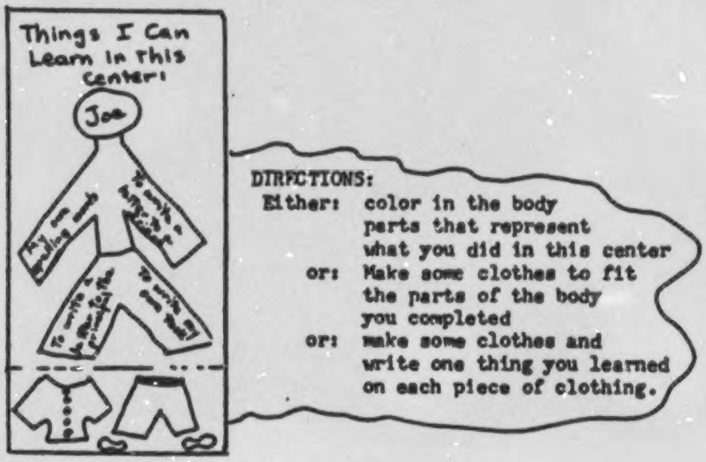
We recommend end-of-the-project/day/week integrations. "Integration" basically means finding the personal meaning in what you have done. It is the basis for setting individual next steps. This is not only record keeping; it is also personal assessment. Each time this occurs, there may be choices for how it is done: writing, drawing, talking into a cassette recorder, etc. This validates the fact that different feelings about work emerge at different times. On various occasions children will feel differently and will talk about their work in different ways. Some Responsive teachers who like a larger group time at the end of the day, have found a sharing of "integrations" a valuable way to end the day. A few teachers set up an "Integration Center" where children go to record integrations or "I learned" thoughts throughout the day. This cassette recording may then be played for the entire group just before the day ends. Individual integrations are supplemented by those integrations of others, and each child goes home richer by this experience.

Records of Child-Work in Learning Centers

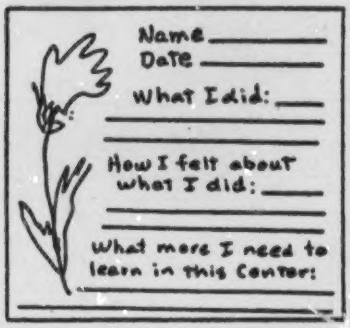
Many of these are actually child record forms collected by the teacher. (See also Assessments within each of the sample Centers.) Here are a few additional ideas: (Many of these are adapted from Kaplan, et al, Change for Children, Pacific Palisades, CA: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1973.)


Andrew:
My Goals for this Center are:
I Learned:
I still need to work on:

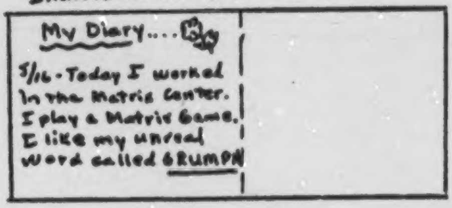

Sue
Taking a look at my work in this Center.
I Learned:
What I liked best in this Center:
What I liked least in this Center


Things I Can Learn in This Center:
Joe

DIRECTIONS:
Either: color in the body parts that represent what you did in this center
or: Make some clothes to fit the parts of the body you completed
or: make some clothes and write one thing you learned on each piece of clothing.


Name
Date
What I did:
How I felt about what I did:
What more I need to learn in this Center:

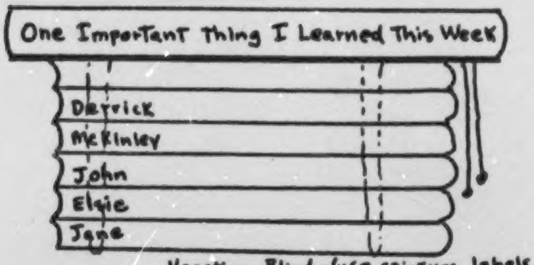
Individual Diary of Centers



5/16 - Today I worked In the Matrix Center. I play a Matrix Game. I like my unreal word called GRUMPH

Records of the Entire Class

In addition to recording where each individual child is, it is sometimes important to know the range of an entire class. Here are some ideas:

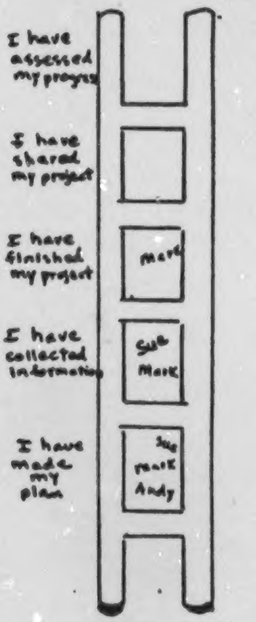

One Important Thing I Learned This Week
Derrick
McKinley
John
Elsie
Jane

Venetian Blind - (use stickum labels for children to write on)

	MATH									LANGUAGE									
	Basic addition facts	Basic sub. facts	mult. x 3	mult. x 6	mult. x 9														
Susan	4/3																		
Paul		3/4																	
Bob																			
Marie																			

Vocabulary Development (re: writing with own words)

Almost Always Asks for help	Uses Resources: Peers / Dictionary	Almost always writes on his or her own
Sandra Marie Paul Derrick Suzanne Robert McKinley	Sue Tom	Rose Dettra Andre


I have assessed my project
I have shared my project
I have finished my project
Mare
I have collected information
Sue
Mark
I have made my plan
Sue
Mark
Andy

Class Ladder

CHILD-KEPT RECORDS

Many of the previous examples can be applied here. We will merely call your attention to a few more ideas.

- Diaries of activities, feelings, things children are pleased about, things children feel need more work, things children like or don't like. Diaries should be both cognitive and affective. What was the highlight of the day? What were you most satisfied with? Least satisfied with? What would you most like to do tomorrow?, etc.
- Center self-assessments.
- Individual records of the results of Teacher-Child conferences.

What I have read:

Book	Author	Date I Began	Date I Finished	My Comments....

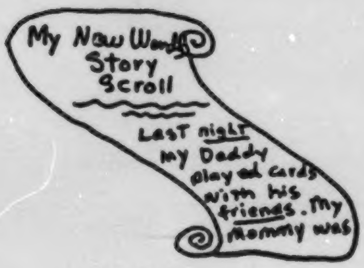
I Know..... AND.... I Can Do.....

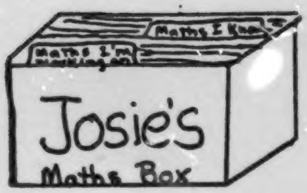
Things I Know:	Date
- Addition facts	
- Subtraction facts	
Things I Can Do:	
- Add Grocery Store bills	

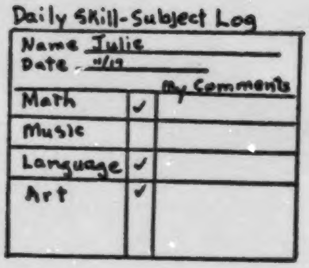
Name

My Week - What I've Done!!

☆ Daily MUSTS	M.	T.	W.	Th.	F.
*Math					
Art					
*Language					
Science					
Music					


My New Words Story Scroll
Last night my Daddy played cards with his friends. My Mommy was

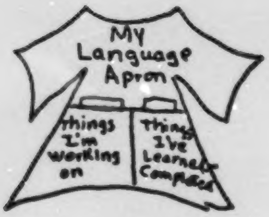




Daily Skill-Subject Log

Name Julie
Date 11/17

		My Comments
Math	✓	
Music		
Language	✓	
Art	✓	



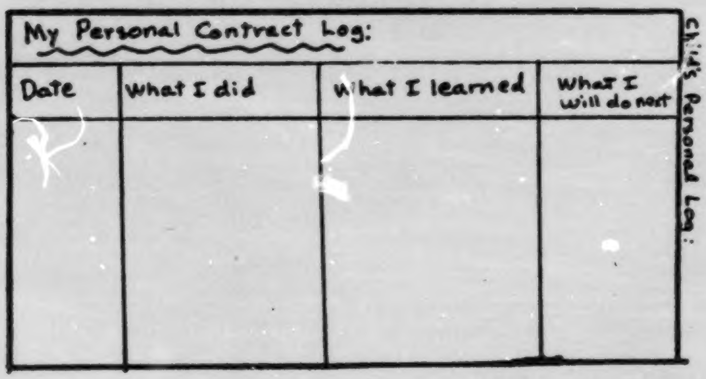
Records of Contracts

The purpose of a contract is to encourage the child to take his or her own responsibility while keeping the teacher informed of what he or she has been doing. A contract is a student-teacher agreement. The expectations are clearly defined by both the student and the teacher. The contract represents a commitment to a plan of action! It can also serve as a record of accomplishments.

Caution: Don't let kids get bored with the same old contract-formats. Also don't over-contract kids so that they are contracted-to-death before they buy their first bike on time-payment from Wards or mortgage their first home through Bank of America!

> Discussion, both with other children and with teacher, is of FIRST IMPORTANCE AT ALL STAGES. It is a most reliable instrument for assessment and diagnosis.
>
> --Inside the Primary School by John Blackie

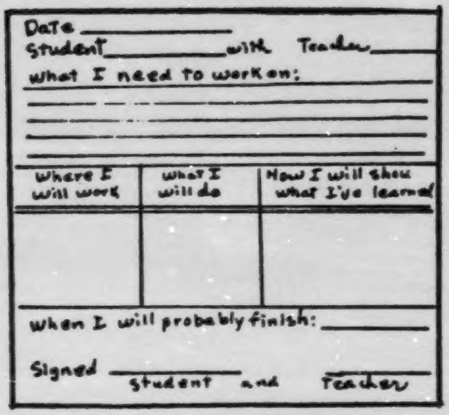
Here are just a few format ideas:



My Personal Contract Log:

Date	What I did	What I learned	What I will do next

Child's Personal Log:

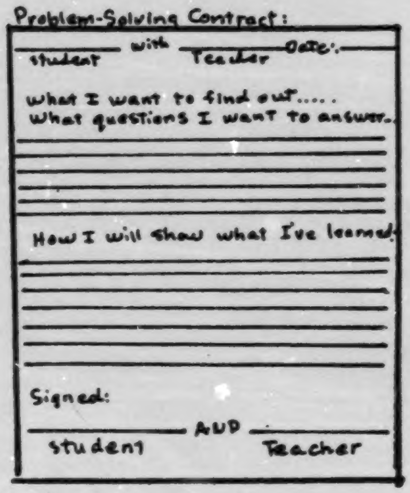


Date ____________
Student ____________ with Teacher ____________
What I need to work on:

Where I will work	What I will do	How I will show what I've learned

When I will probably finish: ____________

Signed ____________ and ____________
student teacher



Problem-Solving Contract:

____________ with ____________ Date: ____________
student Teacher

What I want to find out.....
What questions I want to answer.

How I will show what I've learned:

Signed:

____________ AND ____________
student Teacher

As a summary of Part III, it seems appropriate for the teacher to ask himself or herself a few general and specific assessment questions. Some questions for teachers follow.

General Questions:

- How have I planned my day?
- Have I allowed enough freedom for very independent children to assume responsibility for their own learning?
- Have I given enough time to those children who need to develop more skills in independence?
- Are there opportunities for small groups to solve problems as they arise? Has the problem-solving gone on in a vacuum? Are only off-the-wall or teacher-invented problems being solved?
- Are there ample opportunities for children to question and to explain what they're doing to adults and to peers? Have

children been offered opportunities to practice organizing information and thoughts?

- Are all people in the room aware that there's not always just one way of doing things and that differences are celebrated here?

Specific Questions That Relate to Managing Centers:

- How do children get to Centers?
  - Of their own volition? Do they make choices?
  - Do they make choices?
  - With teacher-given assignments?
  - All at pre-set times with pre-set tasks?
- Is there opportunity for interaction and problem solving within a Center?
- Is there opportunity for movement and interaction among Centers?
- Are children offered different degrees of freedom and responsibility in choosing tasks and Centers?
- Is there sharing of knowledge and integration of what children learned in Centers?

CHAPTER FOUR:

QUESTIONS THAT TEACHERS HAVE ASKED

The following questions and answers deal with problems teachers have encountered (or fear they will encounter when they start to use Learning Centers).

Just why are Learning Centers such an important way of teaching and learning?

The Responsive Education program places much value on childrens' learning to become independent thinkers and workers; on children learning to share control over their own learning; and on children identifying and solving as many of their own problems as possible. Skills in these areas cannot be developed when children simply follow the teacher's directions all day long. Children need carefully planned experiences which give them opportunities to develop internal controls and decision-making skills. Children need experiences in setting their own focus, making their own plans and choosing appropriate tasks, in integrating, applying, assessing what they have done and in planning their next steps. Learning Centers are one way of providing these kinds of experiences.

How and when do I introduce the skills children need (reading, math, as well as how to work in Centers)? In other words, how do basic skills get taught/learned when a teacher uses Centers?

Introductory/motivating experiences may be used to teach the skills which are then reinforced and extended within interesting tasks in Centers. For example, measuring length and seeing patterns and relationships are basic math skills that the teacher makes sure the children understand before they attempt the tasks in the "How Long, How High, How Wide?" Learning Center. Of course, Centers may serve different purposes for different children, and some children need more introductory experiences than others.

How can I introduce Centers when neither the children nor I have ever used them before?

First, move at a comfortable pace! Perhaps introduce one new Center at a time. (See the section on scheduling and "preparation activities".) One idea to answer your question is to make the first few Centers "experiments" for you and the children. Ask them to predict how things will go:

- Will they be able to follow the rules?
- Will children finish their work?
- How many children will be able to find tasks they like/need?
- Which children will want more Centers in the classroom? etc.

This could be a marvelous chance to model teacher-problem-solving or inquiry. Discussing and analyzing the relationship of children's predictions to what really happened would be good practice in self-assessment.

I'm afraid children won't take care of the materials in Learning Centers.

This is a well-grounded fear, especially if you have really interesting materials. If you have spent your time and energy collecting and making many of the materials, it is reasonable for you to want them to be taken care of. One good way of helping children share "ownership" of materials is to clearly tell them where each thing came from--the dime store, your attic, the school library, school supply catalog, local Goodwill store, children in the classroom, etc. Do this carefully, so that children get the message you and they have all cared enough to gather some really fine things to learn from. Your attitude will be "catching". If necessary, you could tell children that if they wanted something so badly that they just had to have it, they should come and tell you and you'd help him or her problem-solve the situation. (Perhaps the child could borrow a magnifying glass for overnight with the precise understanding that he or she would return it in the morning.) Consumable supplies, however, are another issue. Children need to learn good ecology and conservation habits. Show children how to save construction paper scraps, wipe off glue bottle nozzles and just exercise good precise care for supplies and careful storage systems.

How can I be sure that children produce quality work when they're in Centers?

Quality work, personal pride in work, really getting "into" a project, going somewhere with your own thinking are goals of Responsive Learning Centers. You can help children learn to honestly assess quality work at their own level by having individual conferences, where a child is helped to evaluate his or her own progress (not in relation to others). Using children's interests as bases for activities and involving them in creating their own tasks and tasks for others helps here also. The teacher's honest assessments of "I believe you can do more, make your work neater, I need for you to do this over again" convey the message that you believe in the child's ability to do better work; that you really care for him or her as a person; so much so that you won't accept poor quality work. Be sure that all assessments are done in the context of a specific activity. It helps to have children give their own honest feelings about their work first. This is information-gathering for the teacher and helps you know how evaluative you need to be. It is also important to begin Learning Centers by telling the children about your expectations. Setting individual "measures of success" when you are planning with children helps a great deal also.

How can I ever keep track of what children are doing in Centers?

Idea: Have children do it! Nothing can substitute for a good integration task with individuals or small groups about what they've learned, liked, not liked, are still working on in Centers. This could be done orally and then children could fill in their task sheets. Or, you could keep a Center log book, similar to a guest book, at each Center. The children could "sign-in", write their comments and sign out again with the date, etc. If children can't write yet, use as many cassette tape recorders as you can find! (See "Record-keeping" for more ideas.)

How can I have Centers when my children can't read task cards?

Try language master cards, tape recorded messages from the teacher on cassettes, rebus symbols on cards, older children and through introductions to Centers so that children KNOW when they go there what the options are. (See the "Notes on Task Cards".)

I believe I can stimulate children's thinking better in large groups than by their working alone in Centers. How do you respond?

First, Learning Centers are not designed to replace group interactions! If you feel you work best with groups, try just extending your motivating discussions and put the independent work children would normally be doing into Centers. This is just re-formatting what you are already doing. In your group discussions you may be able to involve children in initiating their own ideas for Centers. You and the children may just find that Centers are convenient and fun ways of individualizing what you're already doing!

How can I ever make enough Centers? I don't have enough time or energy!

First, don't "do yourself in" by creating mountains of laminated, beautifully felt-penned task cards! Involve the children as much as possible. Some Centers could include some workbook pages appropriate to the activity. Begin by making a few single-focus Centers for just a few children. Be sure to include all the elements:

- child objectives
- rules/directions/materials needed
- task choices that involve problem solving
- child assessments and integration

Just keep them simple at first. Problem-solving tasks will keep children involved longer than you think!

Does every unit, textbook, idea need to be adapted into a Learning Center format? (Or, can some materials be used just as they are in Centers?)

First, NO, not every skill, activity, theme, concept, etc. can be, nor should be, put into Learning Centers. Do only as many Centers as you and the children are comfortable with. Obviously, small and large group time with the teacher is still crucial. Secondly, YES, some workbook pages can be used just as they are with the addition of the Responsive Process. In other words, if the teacher carefully introduces a concept; helps the children set their focus, plan what they will do and how they will do it; helps children integrate, apply, assess their own work and plan their next steps; then almost any material can be used for learning in Centers if you want to.

What about motivation? Can children be taught to be more self motivated? How? Motivated enough to take off from one task idea and turn it into something wonderful? Motivated to create and run their own learning when they're used to everything done for them?

Introductory experiences where teachers gather information about children offer some motivation and carefully prepare kids for working in Centers by explaining objectives, rules, directions/tasks, assessments. Then when the teacher follows up with a conference, the children begin to get the message that Learning Centers are "for real" and that real learning is supposed to go on in them. Much experience with this sequence plus open and trusting relationships when teacher/children share ideas and interests is a pre-requisite for children beginning to contribute their own ideas for Learning Centers. See also the Learning Centers in this guide: Postal Service, Electricity. Those are both good examples of child-motivated Centers that the teacher then built upon.

What could I do when several children persist in breaking the ground rules by invading Centers that already have the maximum number of children working?

First, please take daily precautions against this: Go over ground rules and the feelings of children who are being disturbed; set up consequences for not attending to the rules; put up "do not disturb" signs when Centers are full; set a timer or a clock at the most popular Centers so that children can remember that they only have so much time to spend there.

If cautions haven't worked, problem-solve on the spot. What is important is that children realize the purpose of rules and that they be guided in self-assessing their own behavior. The teacher needs to always listen to all viewpoints in the situation and perhaps change some rules as well as involve the children in deciding on the consequences of breaking ground rules.

What could I do when I'm working with a reading group and two or three children are squabbling in a Learning Center?

The first thing to do at the moment is to determine whether or not you have to interfere: Are children disagreeing over a task or content issue or are they just plain fighting? Can they solve it themselves, or are they disturbing you and your group so much that you have to do something?

If children do a lot of squabbling, don't be discouraged with Centers, just think for a few moments. There is a message in children's behavior that you need to decode. One possible cause could be: Not enough preparation on ground rules. e.g. Not enough role-playing and discussions leading to the children really "owning" the rules. Or, perhaps, you need to add a teacher rule that those children cannot work next to each other in a Learning Center for a certain amount of time and be sure they know why. After that amount of time, discuss their feelings and contract with them for not squabbling for a particular period of time. Or, Centers aren't interesting enough! Or, perhaps, you need to work on independence skills more. If ALL ELSE FAILS, ASSIGN those children to different tasks in different Centers in different parts of the room and build on children's interest.

How can I possibly get children to help create their own Learning Centers?

This is a good, logical and crucial question! Build one step at a time! Children will create their own tasks only after much positive experience in working in teacher-initiated Learning Centers. This is one reason why it is especially important for Learning Centers to have open-ended tasks, so that children will have experienced some "going with" their own ideas. i.e. Once they've had some experience with using their own ideas in the classroom, you may be able to work with a small group in a brainstorming way just to get out and list and credit all children's ideas. You could then take children's ideas and create task cards from them. Share them the next day, crediting the children. Place a xeroxed picture of the "idea-kid" on the task card.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A Teacher Talks About Changing

I gradually began to sense I had some habits, some traditions that I hadn't even questioned. Changes would be difficult - even disturbing. Reading had always been first in the morning, just as desks had always faced the chalkboard - so kids could see the tasks. As I read and attended workshops, I became aware of the need to really stop, look and question "the way it's always been done."

I knew it was important for me to be comfortable with change; I had to begin to find the things I wanted to look at and evaluate such as: What parts of my room arrangement and materials really lead to learning? Which are the area and materials which hinder it? Is it necessary for children to not talk or change seats while working? Is it crucial for all children to work on the same subject at the same time? Are so many whole-class experiences/lessons/"good mornings" really effective? To what extent are all the children learning? Is there evidence they are applying their knowledge? Are new interests developing? Are they excited about their work - intellectually curious? Are children developing self-discipline? What happens when the teacher steps out of the room? How about groups? Do they tend to remain static? Are children grouped by ability because they tend to learn better that way?

As I began to ask these questions, I began to wonder how much I could really discard about my rather conventional teaching and what I could substitute. I know the past was not the issue, it's my "NOW" that is important. Yet before I got head-over-heels into a transition I wasn't prepared for, I was helped to consider some crucial issues and make personal decisions about them:

1. Where am I going to start - What things make me comfortable? The children?

2. What is my "now" teaching style? How much change can I tolerate? How will I react to change? Not that any of my present characteristics or attitudes would have to stand in the way of changes I really wanted to make. IF I decided I wanted to change, I could. I felt that the time had to be right and I had to personally "own" the change I said I wanted to make. Yet I did have to take a look at my present modus operandi and "own up to" what I was currently doing and make realistic expectations of the changes I could make.

3. Where are the children? Have they had any experience with independent work? With work in small groups? In Learning Centers? How ready will they be to give up their desks? Some children really seem to need them. How will the children react to change? How much "say" should they have in what gets changed, when, why, how?

4. How will administrators, other teachers, parents react to change? How will I relate to other adults who may be affected by any changes the children and I might make?

5. How fast do I want to change? After assessing where all the major factors are "coming from," I, as the teacher, can decide/choose how I want to begin. I need to be at least semi-comfortable in my changing. My choices seem to be:

   - Starting slowly - Changing one area of the room at a time; adding one Center at a time; increasing materials for exploration in one content area at a time to meet Responsive criteria.

   - Moving moderately - Changing at least 50% of my space and materials to meet Responsive criteria.

   - Changing completely - This means changing everything all at once. This is a rather radical approach and may prove the most difficult. Much, of course, depends on my ability to adjust to change.

APPENDIX B

Branching: A Technique for Bringing Children's Ideas to the Surface

What is Branching?

Branching is a graphic way of representing thinking; of conceptualizing ideas, facts and information. Branching can be an organizer for easily retrieving information. Branching can help:

- focus on headlines or important ideas (it is a way to see a Gestalt and details in relation to main ideas)
- categorize support for headlines or important ideas
- quickly record ideas and their relationships
- format the "pushing" of the mind: "What else can I/we think of in that area?"
- building connections: "Oh, that makes me think of..."
- critical thinking (judgments/decision making)
- increase comprehension and ease (unless details are placed in a structured pattern, they may be rapidly forgotten)

How to Branch

Branching, one form of mapping intellectual territory traveled, is as old as the flow chart or the sentence diagram. (Even Evelyn Wood uses it as an approach to rapid reading.) Branching can be used as a substitute for note-taking and outlining; a verbal picture of ideas that are organized and symbolized by the composer. As an exercise in critical thinking it demands insightful judgments and decisions about material.

There are three basic steps: First, one decides on the branch's starting point by locating the main idea; next one determines the secondary categories or parts. After labeling these parts, connect them with the main idea. The next and last step is adding supporting details.

If you have ever designed a flow chart, you know the basic procedure for branching. In a flow chart or any graph, the information is arranged in hierarchical order of intellectual importance. Words are kept at a minimum. The effect is that of perceptual comprehension rather than verbal. Instead of reading the information one SEES it. The Gestalt, seeing the whole and all its related parts, yields a powerful impact, immediate comprehension and easy retention.

Branching an idea allows for the uniqueness of the creator since the process reflects the personality of the brancher.

Uses of Branching

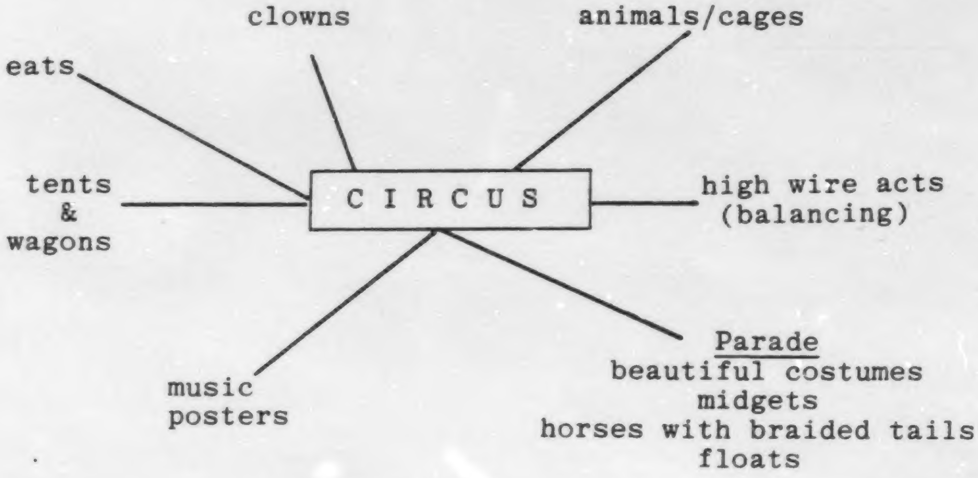
Branching may be used individually, with a partner or with large and small groups of children and adults. It is useful in needs assessment, planning and recording the progress of an experience and/or in assessing outcomes.

Some specific uses for teachers include:

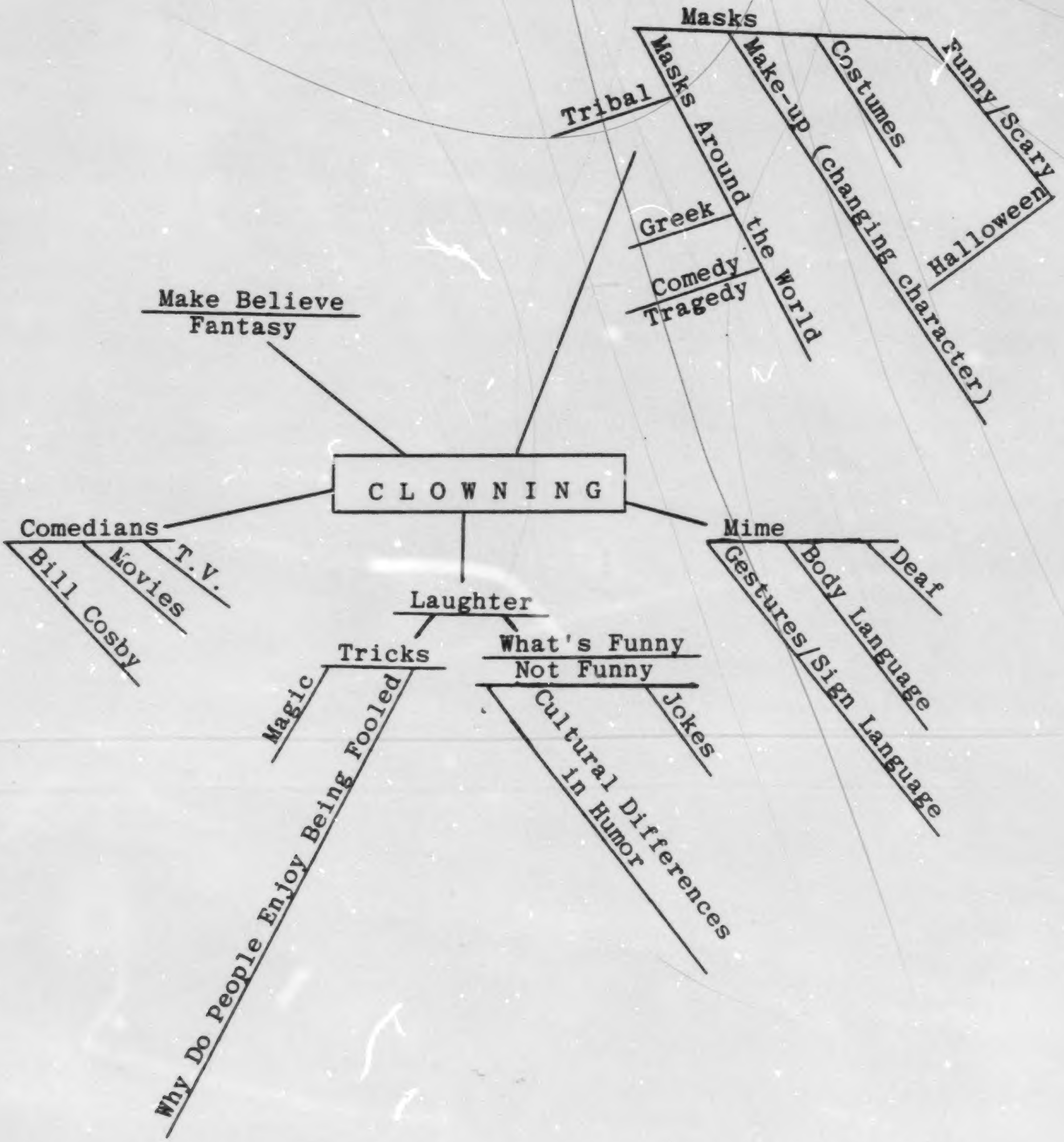
1. Making individual learning plans (teachers and children)
2. Recording information the teacher gathers on children (interests and needs)
3. Planning a Learning Center, theme, field trip, party, etc. with small or large groups of children.

Examples of Branching

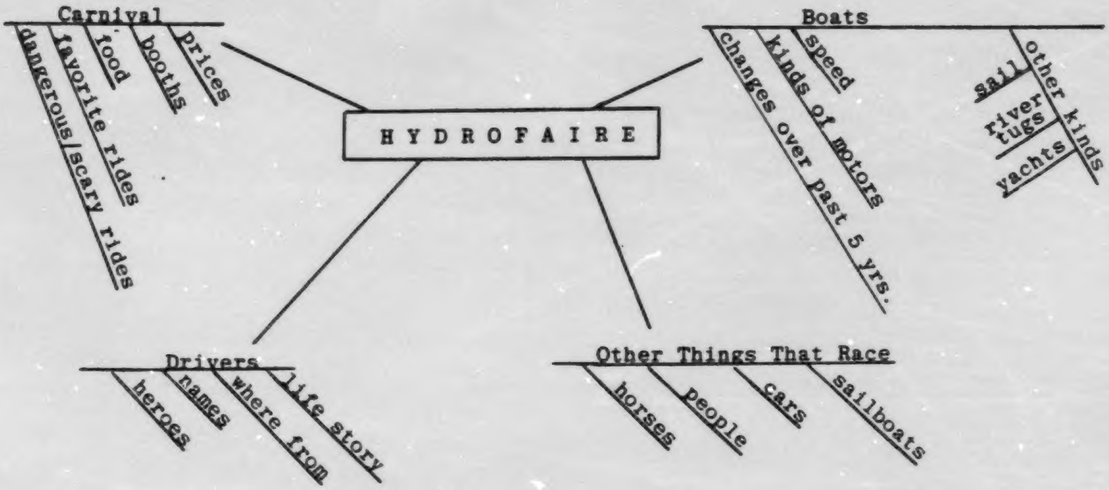
In the classroom: The children were interested in the CIRCUS since it was at the local coliseum for two weeks. Before introducing the theme (CIRCUS), the teacher first went to the circus to remind herself of what it was all about. Then she did some analysis of what she saw and speculated on things that could be studied about the circus. As a way of starting out her pre-planning, she wrote the word CIRCUS on the middle of a blank sheet and then wrote down different aspects of the circus as they occurred to her. (This was her personal homework before she helped the children brainstorm the aspects of the circus that occurred to them.)



Then the teacher looked at each subtheme and began to develop them in the same way. This time, however, she was more specific in terms of ideas for classroom activities that could be studied in relation to a field trip to the circus.



Below is an example of a teacher branching with children as preparation for studying the aspect of a community event. (The hydroplane racing event occurs on the Ohio River every year in Owensboro, Kentucky.) The following is a result of teacher-children branching the aspects of the hydrofaire (from which they planned classroom Learning Centers).



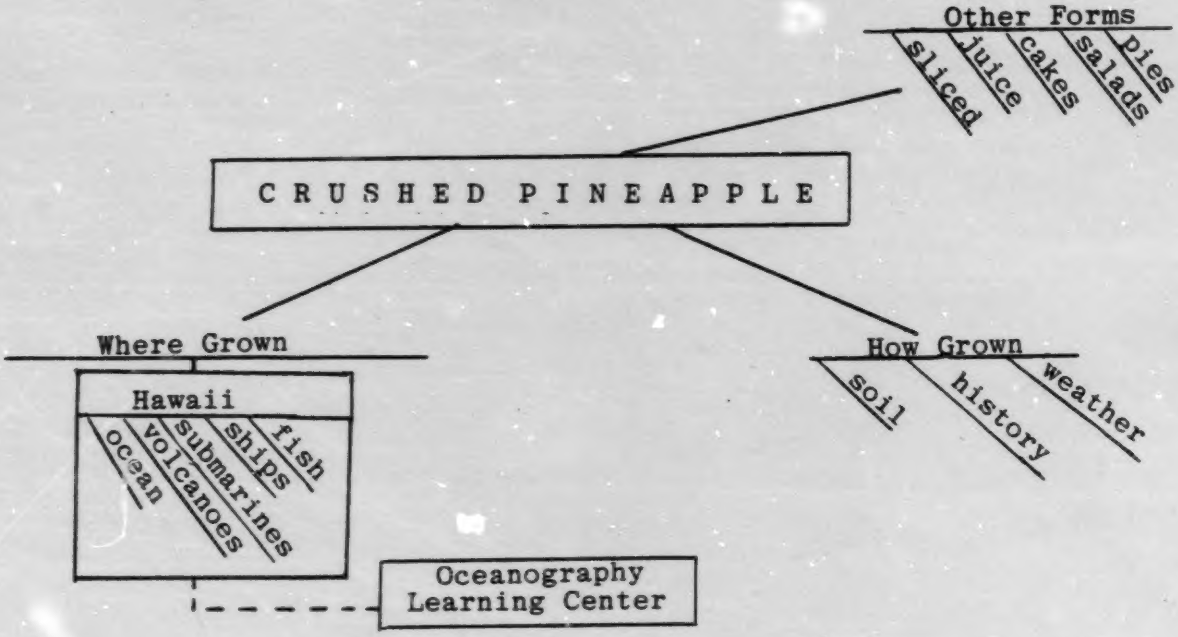
Other classroom Learning Centers or themes could be planned by branching with children such ideas as:

- zoo
- monsters/dinosaurs
- T.V. heros
- songs
- transportation
- power (electricity, batteries, lights, doorbells)

etc.

Children's Personal Interest Branching

One child didn't know what the crushed pineapple served in the school cafeteria was. The original curiosity about crushed pineapple lead to a creation of a Learning Center on Oceanography. (Can you follow the child's thinking?)



Sources

Kohl, Herbert. On Teaching. New York: Bantam Books, 1977, pp. 29-61.

Buckley Hanf, Marilyn. "Mapping: A Technique for Translating Reading Into Thinking." In Journal of Reading, January, 1977.

Children, Teachers, Staff Developers in Owensboro, Kentucky and Lebanon, New Hampshire, Spring, 1978.

APPENDIX C

Principal/Teacher/Child Relationships

This section is offered to the teacher with the purpose of attempting to answer the following questions:

- What does a principal do that helps teachers respect children and themselves and to be clear about rules, "freedoms", feelings?

- What does a principal do that helps teachers and children to be as independent as possible?

Many teachers have mentioned the important part the principal played in the early development of their teaching ability as well as the support for implementation of more mature ideas after they've spent some years investigating their own philosophy of teaching and learning. The principal who supplies (offers) encouragement, support and criticism that leads to growth, plus his or her own ideas is a real plus to a teacher. In fact, some principals have the reputation of being trainers of teachers. It has been suggested that the way a principal functions within his or her role is a dependable predictor of staff morale.

A Responsive principal treats teachers in a way that models how he or she wants teachers to treat children and this involves not telling teachers what to do, how and when to do it. This is in direct opposition to the principal who sees his or her role as an authority who gives orders, solves all problems for others and keeps complete control of all school matters. If the principal takes an authoritarian role with teachers, teachers will model that same role with children.

It is the role of the Responsive principal to:

1. help teachers/children set goals that reflect their concerns;

2. be a continual resource for children/teachers/parents so that they can realize their own goals for the school;

3. express his or her own concerns that relate to school/learning issues;

4. support the teachers/children/parents in creative personal decision-making;

5. model respect for self;

6. facilitate continual problem-solving by all people.

Such a principal is insightful, clear, in personal control of himself or herself and unthreatened by anyone's behavior or questions.

Some principal behaviors that support teachers' and children's independent thinking and problem-solving, creativity, clarity on rules, freedoms and feelings are:

- Recognizing People and Problems

Each person is encouraged to "own" (take responsibility for) his or her feelings, problems and behavior. This means that the principal supports teacher and child frustrations and yet does not get into the position of solving problems for them. The principal views any behavior as an unclear message that needs to be decoded. This decoding is only possible when the person talks about his or her behavior. This talking can only happen when it's safe to do so; when the person knows he or she won't be judged.

- Accepting/Respecting People and Problems

All people, their thoughts, feelings and behaviors, are viewed as assets; and their behavior and problems (positive or negative) are viewed as data that the principal needs to understand before he or she can respond.

A Responsive principal accepts people's feelings and behavior at face value and tries to comprehend their meaning. It is important to understand a child's feelings first: "You're really angry." Dealing with the foul language behavior comes later only after the child knows that the principal cares and really wants to hear him or her and his or her message. The child has to know that the principal is not a judge and a jury. If the principal is always a judge (uses his or her own experience-base without hearing about the child's experience), he or she negates trust and loses his or her effectiveness. One principal said:

> "If a child hears me saying, 'I really understand that you're mad because ________________, and if I'm wrong, I've misinterpreted the situation', then the child gets the clear message that I really want to understand, and he will correct me. He'll give me more information."*

- Responding to Individuals and Problems

It is important to send respectful messages to other people, messages that tell them you know they're capable of doing their own problem-solving. Reflecting that you have been listening, adding your understanding of the person's feeling to your understanding of another person's words, is one way to do this. This means getting to the feeling behind the behavior.

---

*Jack Ulsiton, Principal, Deer Park School, Fairfax, CA, Conversation, April 1979. This principal is a contributor to the Self-Enhancing Education materials published by S.E.E., Inc. Santa Clara, CA, 1975.

- Building Trust Relationships

Children will help the adult more if it's clear that the adult really wants to hear what they have to say. If there's a trust relationship going, then the adult can help children help themselves; the adult can then help children change their behavior. "We can't change others; people have to change themselves. There's usually little or no lasting change until people trust each other. All of this is essential to human growth, which equals change."*

A Responsive principal** speaks about the results of these four principal behaviors:

> If I really do this, I find I don't have so many problems since people begin to use their own resources to figure out their own problems. They become independent when they know they're adequate. It's even gotten to the point when we're thrashing out school problems in faculty meetings, that someone gets tired or wants to leave and says, "Oh, just GIVE us a solution." Then I'll ask the group if they want me to give them my solution, and there is always a resounding NO! They WANT, need to, have to solve their own problems. These teachers are changing and growing through supporting each other in identifying and solving their own problems - both behavioral and curricular.
>
> All of these steps lead to teachers gaining a sense of internal adequacy that sets up a climate where they allow themselves to change; to take the personal risks of growth and change.
>
> I'm in constant amazement at the complex job of a teacher and I tell them so!
>
> I need to earn the right to go into classrooms. Teachers have to trust me to listen to their feelings before I go about picking apart their behavior or classrooms (which I don't do anyway)... But the person and his or her feelings is the first item on my every agenda.

---

* Ibid

**Ibid

APPENDIX D

An Example of One Teacher-Child Conference

(This experience has been excerpted from the film, "Connections in Learning: Scenes From Responsive Classrooms." San Francisco: Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, 1976.)

Focus or Situation as explained by the teacher:

> In my planning for the conferences, I use my observations and my record-keeping information on what the children have learned and what they're learning now.
>
> Darren's learning to share with Val and the rest of the class what he's learning. He's starting to try out some of his own ideas and to make plans for himself, and in doing this, he's strengthening his own decision-making abilities.
>
> In writing his plan and keeping his log, Darren's working on several language skills. He's working on spelling, handwriting, sentence structure, new vocabulary. And we're both involved in recording what he's doing, what's going on.

Process:

T: Darren, what are you doing on your electrical experiment now?
C: I'm trying to make a bell that rings.
T: Have you tried anything else that's working?
C: Yeah, a buzzer.
T: Do you have any questions that I can help you with?
C: Uh-uh (no).
T: Are you keeping your log now on your electricity experiment?
T: What's the most important thing in your log to you right now?
C: The code.
T: Darren, what kinds of things can you do with the Morse Code?
C: Send messages.
T: Who are you going to send messages to?
C: Val.
T: To Val. Does Val know the Morse Code yet?
C: Uh-uh (no).
T: What's a way that we could teach him the Morse Code?
C: Make him a copy.
T: You could make him a copy?
T: What would you like to get done by Friday with the experiment and with sharing these things with the class?
C: Teaching Val.
T: OK, let's write that down.

APPENDIX E

CLASS MEETINGS

- One Situation
- One Log Book
- Definition/Purpose
- How to Begin
- Possible Problems - Some Possible Solutions

One Situation

Twenty-eight 7-9 year old children and one teacher are comfortably forming a cushioned circle on the floor. The teacher is distinguished only by his size and holding the 24" chalkboard that he points to as he goes over the agenda for Thursday's class meeting.

Analysis

Teacher/children share responsibility for class decisions

Agenda

Lunches - Eddie
Field Trip - Mr. Moore
Money - Chris
Camping Trip - Mr. Moore
Committees - Jenny, Paulie, Benjie

Child responsibility

T: Hot lunch count--Eddie.

Eddie: (Asks for a yes/no response from each child and marks the appropriate column on the cafeteria sheet.)

Teacher makes clear problem statement

Math skills integrated into meaningful situation

T: The next item on the agenda is field trip, and that's my item. You know we have a field trip scheduled for next Tuesday at the Audobon Preserve. We have one serious problem - DRIVERS. I can drive, that's five, and Clarissa's Mom can take seven. How many is that? (He writes the numbers on the chalkboard next to the agenda.)

$$\begin{array}{r} 5 \\ \underline{+7} \end{array}$$

Several Children: Twelve.

Graham: My Mom can take six.

Tish: I think my Dad can drive.

T: How many will fit into your car?

Tish: About seven - we have a wagon - but I need to ask him.

T: (Adds 6 and 7 to the numbers on the board.)

$$\begin{array}{r}5\\+7\\\hline 12\end{array}\qquad\begin{array}{r}6\\+7\\\hline\end{array}$$

Tim: 13

T: How many is that altogether? $\begin{array}{r}12\\+13\\\hline\end{array}$

Josh: 12 and 13 are 25.

T: We have 32 kids going, how many more spaces do we need? $\begin{array}{r}32\\-25\\\hline\end{array}$

Ch: Eight (correcting each other), no, seven.

Dana: My Mom could drive, I think.

Teacher clearly states problem and solution

T: Will you ask her tonight? I know she's driven a lot, but tell her we're desperate. We need to know definite answers on all your cars by tomorrow, because we won't be able to go if we can't get drivers. My problem is I'm not comfortable going home tomorrow on a three-day weekend not knowing, because when we come back to school next Tuesday, we'll be going. We can't keep it hanging in the air, so each of you need to come tomorrow, Friday, knowing for sure about the drivers you've suggested.

Analysis

The next item on our agenda is our money. Chris?

Child responsibility; integrated math

Chris: Our class now has $66.06.

Benjie: All together?

Tom: Add on the bake sales.

Chris: Oh, we really have $75.66 now because I figured it out last night at home. All our bake sales make $75.66.

T: Next on our agenda is camping trip. I have half bad news and half good news. Which do you want first?

Ch: Good news!!!

Teacher clarity; helps kids deal with reality

T: OK. The good news is that our reservations have been confirmed, we do have a campsite for the dates we wanted. The bad news is - try not to get all upset - the reservations got a bit fouled up as they have us down for the wrong campsite. And there's nothing we can do about it. We're at the campsite nearest the bathrooms, farthest from the beach, farthest from the bunkers - but we're still going to the beach.

Reading skills integrated in a meaningful way

Next, the reading of the reports from the camping trip committees. Will the game committee tell us what they've come up with? Jenny?

Jenny: We want to play baseball, frisbees, relays on the beach, steal the bacon, garbage ball, and...

Chris: What's garbage ball?

Craig: It's when you see who can get the most balls into the can the most times.

Child responsibility

T: Jenny, please ask them how they feel about the games your committee suggests.

Ch: (Many begin talking at once.)

Listening skills integrated

T: We need to talk one at a time so we can listen to each other. Do you have any other ideas of what you'd like to play? How do you feel about the things they've suggested?

Children's ideas respected

Ch: Keep away, freeze tag, simon says...

T: Anything else? OK, Jenny, will you add those to your committee's list and then you can talk later about when we will play what.

Child decision-making

Meal planning committee: Have you decided who's going to read the report?.. Paulie?

Paulie: (Mumbles, others can't hear.)

Reading, reporting

T: Can you read more loudly, Paulie?

Paulie: First day, dinner: hot dogs, chili, corn on the cob, fruit salad and then S'moors.

Ch: All right!!! Midnight snacks!!

T: Campfire committee.... Benjie, are you ready to read your report?

etc.

One Log Book

The following sample of child-kept records is excerpted from Class Meeting Journal, Room 2 (grade 3), Deer Park School, Fairfax, CA.

Date	Subject	Person	Items and Results
10/10	Balls	A.H.	Andrew said that we should be able to take out balls before and after school. Decision - YES.
10/10	Couch	M.S.	Mrs. Scott said she is bothered by people jumping on the couch and said not to. We took a vote and if you jump on the couch, you can't sit on it for two days.
10/11	Halloween	D.C.	D.C. wanted to know if we were going to the town festival. We made a list of the Yes's and No's.
10/12	Thanks	M.S.	Mrs. Scott said thanks to the board monitors for putting new chalk on the tray. Please don't break chalk.
10/13	Candy	E.P.	E.P. said he didn't think anybody should eat candy - not even gum - not around him - it's not good for you.
10/14	Field Trip	A.H.	He put a list of people who didn't bring their permission slip for field trip.
10/14	Water	Tony	Tony wanted to say that the water is always dripping and is hard to turn off. Decision: Tell custodian,Tony will do this.
10/15	Saving Places	J.S.	J.S. wanted to say that saving places is no fair. We took a vote and there's no saving places.
10/15	Cubbies	K.S.	K.S. wanted to say lots of people have been leaving food in their cubbies. It's smelly. Please stop. We took a vote to clean up cubbies.
10/15	Books	B.T.	B.T. wanted to tell the people who have overdue books to return them and to keep books neat because he just cleaned up the books.

Definition and Purpose of Class Meetings

Class meetings are group situations where teacher and child problems are shared and solved. They are times for talking about things that have gone well and not so well, for discussing announcements about field trips, etc. In the beginning class meetings usually center around classroom maintenance issues (roll call, lunch count, where to put the wastebasket, how to arrange the furniture, what to do about certain behaviors that cause problems, etc.); later class meetings can focus on more and more content related issues (what do we want to learn about electricity, what are some things we could learn when we go to the zoo, what letter writing skills do we need if we're going to send a letter to the principal, etc.).

Class meetings are times for all persons to come together in order to listen to each other, to share responsibility for living and learning together; for children to share the agenda with the teacher and to begin to think of ideas for solving problems. Class meetings often "clear the air" so that learning can proceed; they produce an attitude of "we're all working together in here".

How to Begin Having Class Meetings

At first, the teacher needs to simply announce, "We're going to experiment with having a class meeting every day. You can help make some of the decisions like when they'll be, how long, where they'll be, some of the rules, etc. Once a week we'll stop and discuss how they're going and what changes we need to make. First, here's a place on the chalkboard for our agenda. You put your name up there by a number, and one word that tells what you want us to talk about."

The children may be reticent at first. The teacher needs to model the importance of this time so that the children get to feel the relevance of this time for them. The teacher also needs to set the first rules, e.g.:

- Raise your hand in order to talk.
- Don't talk when someone else is talking.
- Stick to the point.
- Talk to the person you've got a problem with.
- "Own" your own problem.
- Don't bring anything to the class meeting unless you're going to share it.
- Everybody has to come and sit on the floor. (If you don't like the floor, bring a pillow.)

The rules will vary by individual classrooms and can change as they're found to be inadequate. For example, one class voted to bring their chairs to the meeting one day, and to bring pillows the next day.

Teachers who have been experimenting with meetings for a few years offer the following advice to teachers trying them for the first time:

1. Don't have meetings that are too long. Five minutes may be the appropriate length of time for the first few times.

2. You don't have to always finish the agenda. Stop the meetings before the kids get bored or start breaking the rules they've set and agreed to.

3. It's important for all the children to come and sit all together in a circle in a special part of the room.

4. Don't worry when a meeting doesn't work out. This is an evolving process. Just because it doesn't work one time, don't assume that it won't work the next time. One "blown" meeting is not the end of the whole notion. Talk the situation over with the kids.

5. It's important for the kids to set the agenda with their own names on the board in their own handwriting. The teacher adds his or her items among the kids' items.

6. Children usually don't understand the whole concept of a class meeting at first, but they learn quickly, and usually ALL look forward to this time!

7. As children get used to meetings, have them elect a "recorder" who may only copy the agenda at first and later can learn to write down a few words describing what happened.

8. Move slowly toward elected child-leaders of meetings. Children can set their own criteria for meeting leadership.

9. Always be clear, up-front, honest and consistent. The teacher needs to reserve the right to stop and start meetings and set rules at first.

10. The teacher needs to be clear on what she or he is willing to let the children make decisions on. Don't be afraid to say what you're thinking. Begin

by telling the children the decisions you've made (e.g. rules), and gradually begin to give them more and more responsibility. Once you've given them responsibility, stick to your word.

Possible Problems - Some Possible Solutions

1. Kids Not Listening

Children will often identify this problem themselves. Discuss it, and look for possible reasons. You might allow them to vote on where to have the meeting, have meetings less frequently or for shorter times. You might also try asking them how they think the problem could be solved. (Some classes have decided it was OK to color if you were bored at a class meeting; others have decided on "time out"; three reminders for not following the rules and you have to leave the meeting; other teachers have found that "stop and go" works - every time kids are not following the rules, STOP and remind them, "Do you realize why I stopped the meeting?", clear up the situation and then GO again).

2. Meetings That Become Tattling Places

"I'll put you on class meeting if you don't stop it!" or "So and So won't share the ball at recess."

Try discussing whether the problem concerns the whole class or just one person. Make the rule that if it concerns just one person you have to try to talk to the person before bringing it up at the meeting.

Sometimes, if the teacher is willing, the class meeting can become an outlet for storms that merely pass with one "mad" statement. That teacher may just allow children to state feelings with no one responding.

3. Boring Show and Tell

When children don't stick to the point, go on and on, or just ramble about a topic of personal interest only, you may want to tell the children they have to be able to tell three things about what they're showing that they know will interest three other people at least. Then add some limited question time. As a teacher, don't be afraid to say, "This is really boring or bothering me, we're not going to do it anymore for a while. You can share it personally with me during a conference."

4. Too Long Agenda

Just stop the meeting and add the remaining items to the next day's agenda. Another idea is to "prioritize" the items re: most crucial for today, so you get the crucial decisions made, and perhaps the other items will fade away!

5. Negative Agenda Items

Teacher says, "Today, only positive items." However, you may need to discuss with the children why there are so many negative items, as those issues may be indicators or clues of some things that need to be changed in the classroom. Furthermore, if children decide there are some kids doing things they don't like, make a rule that you can't mention names at a class meeting. (Teachers are always surprised about how kids don't get the same charge out of negativity or blaming when they can't mention names.)

Additional Thoughts

- Sign up on agenda by the time the meeting starts - no adding to after the meeting has begun
- The leader calls on each person with a hand up
- Each day's meeting has time limits
- Prioritize items by voting
- Leader thanks each person who talks
- Teacher thanks each person who talks
- Three reminders and have to leave meeting
- Stop/go - every time not following rules, STOP - reminder, "Do you realize why I stopped the meeting?"
- Give kids as much responsibility as they're ready for:
  . leading meeting
  . counting votes
  . copying agenda
  . timing items with stop watch or second hand
  etc.

Many special thanks to Bryce Moore and Nancy Scott, Deer Park School, Fairfax, California, for their unending conferences with me, and for their allowing me to observe and audiotape their class meetings during the Spring of 1979.

APPENDIX F

A Beginning Bibliography of Books on Organizing Responsive Learning Environments

Here are some books that have been helpful in the writing of these materials; books that are new as well as those that are old friends re-visited. There are, of course, many more books, pamphlets and articles that influenced this work--many were magnificent, some were dull. We just can't keep track of them all. Space has been left for you to add your "gems" to our "Beginning Bibliography." We have annotated some of them; please add your own notes.

These resources are organized into the following categories:

A. Books Describing and Analyzing Current Educational Practices in the U.S.

B. Books That Establish a Philosophical/Psychological Base for Responsive Education

C. Books Describing the History of and Practice in British Primary Schools

D. Thought-Provoking Books About Teachers' Attitudes, Feelings, Expectations and Initial Attempts to Change

E. Books on Cognition and Observing Children

F. Books That Provide Ideas for Organizing Responsive Learning Environments

A. Books Describing and Analyzing Current Educational Practices in the U.S.

Bruner, Jerome, *Toward a Theory of Instruction*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966.

Holt, John, *How Children Fail*. New York: Pitman, 1964.

Jackson, Philip W., *Life in Classrooms*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.

Kozol, Jonathan, *Death at an Early Age*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1967.

Silberman, Charles E., *Crisis in the Classroom*. New York: Random House, Inc., 1970.

Spodek, Bernard and Herbert Walberg, ed., *Studies in Open Education*. New York: Agathon Press, 1975.

B. Books That Establish a Philosophical/Psychological Base for Responsive Education

Brown, George Isaac, *Human Teaching for Human Learning: An Introduction To Confluent Education*. New York: Viking Press, 1971.

Bruner, Jerome S., *The Process of Education*. New York: Vintage Books, 1960.

Holt, John, *Freedom and Beyond*. New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1972.

Morris, Van Cleve, *Existentialism in Education*. New York: Harper and Row, 1966.

Rathbone, Charles H., ed., *Open Education: The Informal Classroom*. New York: Citation Press, 1971.

Silberman, Charles, ed., *The Open Classroom Reader*. New York: Vintage Books.

> This is an excellent collection of some of the best writings in the open education movement. Great writers deal with such issues as: how children learn and grow, the role of the teacher, how to manage time and space, how to make change and key curriculum areas.

Silberman, Melvin, et al, *The Psychology of Open Teaching and Learning*. New York: Little, Brown Publishing Co., 1972.

Stephens, Lillian S., The Teacher's Guide to Open Education. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1974.

A comprehensive work that begins with the philosophy of open education; organizing and developing curriculum for open classrooms. She provides a concise history of informal education in Great Britain.

C. Books Describing the History of and Practice in British Primary Schools

Blackie, John, Inside the Primary School. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.

Brown, Mary and Norman Precious, The Integrated Day in the Primary School. New York: Ballantine Books, 1968.

A factual account of what takes place in the British Infant and Junior Schools; a description of the way children in those schools spend their days. Subjects and interests are integrated quite naturally as children work out their individual ideas. The school day is determined as much as is possible and appropriate by the interests and needs of children. The integrated day could be described as a school day which is combined into a whole and has the minimum of timetabling--each child is planned for physically, socially, intellectually and emotionally in order that he or she may grow at his or her own rate of development. The natural flow of activity, imagination, language, thought and learning which is in itself a continuous process is not interrupted by artificial breaks in scheduling or subject barriers.

The child is encouraged to focus him or herself completely on the work he or she has chosen. It follows logically that he or she then has the time to work on something in depth even though it may take several days, a week or more. As he or she works, problems common to various subjects will arise but within the integrated framework he or she can make an easy transition between any areas of learning.

In a school where the integrated day is in practice, the environment is all-important. It must be so well planned, challenging, interesting and attractive that the child wants to become involved with the materials and wants to satisfy his or her curiosity and to learn. The school is an integrated social unit with all types of children learning to live and work together. The book discusses the environment, the teacher, the child, the sequential development possibilities found in the relationship between infant and junior school and shares teachers' anecdotal records.

Rogers, Vincent R., Teaching in the British Primary Schools. Toronto: The Macmillan Co., 1970.

Weber, Lillian, The English Infant School and Informal Education. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1971.

D. Thought-Provoking Books About Teachers' Attitudes, Feelings and Expectations, and Initial Attempts to Change the Traditional/Conventional Format of Classroom Life

Ashton-Warner, Sylvia, Teacher. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1963.

Channon, Gloria, Homework. New York: Outerbridge and Dienstfrey, 1970.

Dennison, George, The Lives of Children. New York: Random House, Inc., 1969.

Herndon, James, The Way It Spozed to Be. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1965.

Jersild, Arthur T., When Teachers Face Themselves. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University Press, 1955.

Jersild, Arthur T., In Search of Self. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University Press, 1952.

Kohl, Herbert R., The Open Classroom. New York: Vintage Books, 1970.

Moustakas, Clark, The Self. New York: Harper and Row, 1956.

Rogers, Carl, On Becoming a Person. Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1961.

Rogers, Carl, Freedom to Learn. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1969.

This jewel contains a description of Rogers' view of learning; three case studies (how a 6th grade teacher, a college professor structure their classes; Rogers' own way of facilitating a class). These case studies are analyzed for assumptions and for philosophical and value ramifications. The book includes Rogers': "Plan for Self-Directed Change in an Educational System."

The Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc., Tell Us What to Do! But Don't Tell Me What to Do! Dayton, Ohio: The Institute for Development of Educational Activities, Inc. (an I/D/E/A Monograph).

Teachers talk candidly and vividly in a committed manner about change and about their struggles with the meaning of teaching and learning. Written in individual "log" or "diary" style.

Ways to begin teaching for independence. Stress is placed on teachers working with what they have and experimenting with the meaning and application of independent learning in the self-contained classroom. Many ideas are offered at varying levels of application.

E. Books on Cognition and Observing Children

Almy, Milly, Ways of Studying Children. New York: Teachers College Press, 1959.

Gordon, I.J., Studying the Child in the School. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966.

Hawkins, Frances P., The Logic of Action. Boulder, Colorado: University or Colorado, 1969.

This account of the author's work with six young deaf children in a Colorado school is a beautiful, detailed and accurate perception of the actions of children and their interaction with people and things in their environment. Their deafness highlights the language of action, which in Piaget's thinking underlies and parallels verbal action.

Ms. Hawkins combines a vast teaching experience with a deep understanding of the theories and practices of open education to demonstrate her conviction that "given a rich environment--with open-ended raw materials--children can be encouraged and trusted to take a large part in the design of their own learning."

Raths, L.E., A. Jonas, A. Rothstein and Selma Wasserman, Teaching for Thinking, Theory and Application. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, Inc., 1967.

F. Books That Provide Ideas for Organizing Responsive Learning Environments

Baratta-Lorton, Mary, Mathematics Their Way. Menlo Park, Ca.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., 1976.

This math text for teachers contains many ideas that can be adapted to the Responsive Process for Facilitating Learning. It is a rich resource for gathering material for ideas for learning patterns, relationships and place value. The activities definitely need adaptation to make them Responsive.

Blake, Jim and Barbara Ernst, The Great Perpetual Learning Machine. Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1976.

This is a marvelous collection of ideas, games, experiments, activities and recommendations for further exploration; many illustrations; ideas very adaptable for Learning Centers.

Blitz, Barbara, The Open Classroom: "Making It Work." Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1973.

A comprehensive and "preachy" guide to things a teacher ought to consider if he or she is going to "open" up or share control of his or her classroom in any way. The book contains many good examples of what could/should and ought not to go on in the classroom, and some clear guidelines for beginning to open up, if you can take the often racist, lecturing, "I know what's best for you because I've been exactly where you are" mode of communication. (A very helpful book if you can get beyond the previous attributes.)

Hertzberg, Alvin and Edward F. Stone, Schools are for Children. New York: Schocken Books, 1971.

An excellent resource for Responsive, integrated curriculum ideas.

Holt, John, What Do I Do On Monday? New York: Dutton, 1970.

Jones, Richard, Fantasy and Feeling in Education. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

Kaplan, Kaplan, Madsen, Taylor, Change for Children. Pacific Palisades, Ca.: Goodyear Publishing Co., 1973.

Kohl, Herbert R., The Open Classroom: A Practical Guide to a New Way of Teaching. New York: Vintage Books, 1969.

A personal account offered in "I statement" language of how it feels to teach in situations which are not open or responsive and how one person went about making some changes in himself and his classroom DESPITE the structure of the school and system. A book for teachers who want to work on some new things in new kinds of environments. Beautifully readable, inspirational, anecdotal.

Kohl, Herbert R., *On Teaching*. New York: Schocken Books, Inc., 1976.

A sensitive personalized account of Herb Kohl's own efforts to make learning work for his students. It is about specifics of working with children and developing curriculum materials and experiences. It is also about survival skills in the real political world of the school. See especially the description of "branching" as a technique for developing a curriculum theme with and without children (pp. 29-48). See also the section on "integrating the curriculum" (pp. 48-60). See also his philosophy on basic skills (pp. 61-73). (Page numbers are in reference to Bantam Book edition, second printing, April 1977.)

Taylor, Jay, *Organizing the Open Classroom*. New York: Schocken Books, 1974.

Making It Strange. Prepared by Synectics, Inc. New York: Harper and Row, 1968.

A set of workbooks designed to stimulate creative thinking and writing. The exercises in these books are easily adapted for Learning Centers for the purpose of encouraging imaginging and making new connections. These are excellent resources for helping children learn to generate new ideas for solving problems.